Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program

Final Report

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Glossary of Acronyms

ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
BBSC	Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada
CAILC	Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres
CCB	Canadian Council of the Blind
CCSD	Canadian Council on Social Development
CWLC	Child Welfare League of Canada
DPPP	Disabled Persons Participation Program
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
ILRCs	Independent Living Resource Centres
NAPO	National Anti-Poverty Organization
NVO	Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations
NVSSO	National Voluntary Social Services Organizations
NWG	National Welfare Grants
ODI	Office for Disability Issues
RMAF	Results-based Management Accountability Framework
SACA	Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec
SDPP	Social Development Partnerships Program
SUFA	Social Union Framework Agreement
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat
VSI	Voluntary Sector Initiative

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP) provides grants and project contributions to social non-profit organizations. SDPP was created in 1998 by bringing together elements of two previous programs: National Welfare Grants and the Disabled Persons Participation Program. Under the new terms and conditions, the principal objectives of the SDPP are to:

- Advance nationally significant best practices and models of service delivery;
- Strengthen community capacity to meet social development needs; and
- Strengthen the capacity of the social non-profit sector to contribute information to government and others on new and emerging social issues.

Approximately $16 million is distributed annually in grants and contributions under the SDPP.

Approach to the Evaluation

The evaluation of the SDPP was conducted in the last two quarters of fiscal year 2001/02. The development of the evaluation methodology recognized that evaluating the SDPP presents a number of practical challenges. As a partnership program, the SDPP is designed to achieve its objectives through the funding of projects and organizations that are beyond the direct influence of the program. Also, the SDPP funds a diverse range of projects and outputs, and there are no common metrics (such as the number of job placements) by which performance can be quantified. In addition, about 35% of SDPP funding is provided through grants and, therefore, has limited accountability requirements and no specified deliverables.

The methodology used to evaluate the SDPP attempted to address these challenges and was guided by a review of evaluations of similar programs in other countries. The evaluation approach included the following components:

- **Literature Review:** Prior to the evaluation, a literature review of evaluations of programs with funding arrangements similar to SDPP in other OECD countries was undertaken. The review helped to identify examples of current evaluation methods that could be useful in evaluating the SDPP.
- **Case studies:** A broad range of 30 cases (i.e. 26 projects and four grants) was used in order to capture the diversity of project types and recipient organizations. The 30 cases spanned 17 organizations.

- **Key informant interviews:** Interviews were conducted with 33 key informants covering 19 funded organizations, eight program staff, two organizations potentially eligible for funding who had not applied, two organizations whose funding applications had been rejected, and representatives of two provincial government organizations that performed similar functions to the SDPP at the provincial level (The Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA)).

- **Focus groups:** Unresolved issues emerging from the key informant interviews were further explored in two focus groups, with each focus group including representatives from five organizations.

- **A review of program files and documents:** Information gathered from program files and documents was used to provide in-depth information on the allocation of funding and to complement the other lines of evidence.

Samples of the case studies, focus groups and key informant interviews were independent (i.e. organizations chosen for case studies were not chosen for the key informant interviews). Also, steps were taken to make effective use of qualitative information, for example by including a wide range of key informants and collecting information in a manner that helps control for the subjectivity of opinions. The case studies were conducted on site whenever possible. In total, the evaluation reached representatives from 44 organizations associated with the program, representing more than a quarter of the 164 organizations that had received funding commitments as of 2000/2001.

Evaluation Findings

Relevance

The SDPP has several strategic roles:

- *Increasing community participation:* The overall goal of the SDPP is to increase participation and inclusion of members of populations at risk. This overall goal is consistent with the HRDC mission statement that includes the objective "*... to enable Canadians to participate fully in the workplace and in the community.*" The overall goal of the SDPP is also relevant to the government's recent Skills Agenda.

- *Building capacity of partners in the social non-profit community:* HRDC places significant emphasis on working with partners for policy development and program implementation, including partners from the voluntary and social non-profit sector. The SDPP is one of the few programs directly contributing to building the capacity of potential partners in the non-profit community at the national level.

- *Consistent with the Social Union Framework Agreement:* In providing grants and contributions to organizations in the social non-profit community, the SDPP uses one of the agreed-upon channels for direct federal spending.

Program Impacts

Evidence from the case studies and key informant interviews was used to examine program impacts for the three principal objectives of the SDPP:

- *Advancing nationally significant best practices and models of service delivery.* The case study evidence indicated that project contributions provided by the SDPP have contributed to the development of new and useful knowledge regarding best practices and service delivery models, although this tended to involve developing/applying a new approach drawn from the general body of knowledge rather than conducting new research that added to the general body of knowledge. All of the 18 case-study projects in this area were found to have delivered on their proposed outputs. Of the 18 projects, seven were rated as exceeding their expected impacts, and none were rated below expectations.

  The evidence also indicates that dissemination of the new knowledge tended to occur within the project sponsor's network, but often did not reach beyond that network to other service providers and businesses. Therefore dissemination of new knowledge regarding best practices and service delivery models was identified as an area for improvement.

  Project funding and the associated application process also generated additional positive impacts that included greater involvement and vigour within the organizations, and there were indications that project contributions helped to leverage new partnerships, assistance and/or contributions from others. However, such positive indications need to be tempered by the requirements for the program to have demonstrable safeguards in place regarding overlap and duplication.

- *Strengthening community capacity to meet social development needs.* The case study evidence indicated that grants tended to be used to support core costs such as overhead costs, office expenses and staff salaries. The grant money was also used to increase the capacity to do research, fundraising and the work of the organization.

  The case-study grants received high ratings on their impact in three areas: the sustainability of the organization; the capacity to organize activities; and the capacity to participate in government committees. Key informants confirmed that SDPP support was important in maintaining their organization's capacity and relevance. The case study evidence also found that grants were important to the survival of some national organizations, but minor to others.

  The case-study grants were also rated as having a medium to high impact on fundraising and the capacity to improve the situation of targeted clients. The impact scores were lower, however, in the case of impacts on the number of staff, volunteer capacity, the capacity to train staff/volunteers, the capacity to produce, implement tools and best practices.

- *Strengthening the capacity of the social non-profit sector to contribute information and knowledge to government and others on new and emerging social issues.* The case-study evidence indicated that grants were rated as being particularly important in enabling organizations to respond to government invitations for participation in policy development, and this was confirmed by the key informant interviews. Fourteen of the 26 case-study projects had outputs relevant to government committees or task forces, with six of these exceeding the expectations of stakeholders, seven meeting expectations, and only one falling short.

- *There is some evidence that organizations are using SDPP to leverage additional funds and support from others.* There is, however, a risk that this additional support is not incremental as program design safeguards are not in place. To reduce this risk, explicit safeguards should be introduced (e.g. by requiring applicants to attest that the project will not go ahead without SDPP funding).

- *There is evidence that partnerships were created and sustained because of SDPP, but program safeguards are needed to limit the potential for overlap and duplication of activities funded by the program.*

Regarding the sustainability of results, the case studies and key informant interviews indicated that the SDPP is generating sustainable results by funding one-time projects that produce benefits/products that are incorporated into the existing practices of organizations. For grants, the case study and key informant evidence suggests that much of the capacity from the grants would be curtailed in the absence of continued funding, which would in turn reduce the ability of these grant recipients to contribute knowledge on new and emerging issues. Although the case studies and key informants indicated that grants and contributions help to leverage funds and assistance from other sources, the SDPP's program data systems were under development at the time of the evaluation and did not permit the evaluation to conduct a comprehensive quantitative analysis of leveraging at that time. While leveraging of funds did occur, the leveraging cannot be considered to have been fully incremental.

Design and Delivery

The evaluation found a number of areas for improvement in program design and delivery. Many of these areas had been previously identified by the Auditor General and were in the process of being corrected by the program at the time of evaluation.

- *Types of funding activities:* Three categories of activities are eligible for SDPP funding: applied research, development, and capacity building. Key informants and focus groups considered capacity building to be the most important category of funding. They also considered the distinction between applied research and development to be unclear.

- *Allocation of funds:* The list of grant recipients appears to be guided by history rather than a clear priority-setting process. Also a large share of project contributions went to a small number of organizations, with 8% of the 145 recipient organizations receiving about half of the funding committed to projects.

  The SDPP is moving towards open intake processes held at regular intervals for project proposals. The general view at the time of the evaluation was that it was too soon to know how well they would work.

- *Consultation mechanisms:* The allocation of grants also raised concerns about the SDPP's consultation process. The SDPP periodically consults with established *reference groups* of program stakeholders on program priorities and other issues. The membership of the *reference groups* is largely based on history, with no explicit mechanism for new or potential program recipients/stakeholders to have a voice.

- *Administrative and operational data:* Lack of data prevented the determination of program cost-effectiveness or an assessment of program leveraging. Problems in using or relying upon program data are frequently encountered in evaluations. In the development of a new RMAF, data systems and collection mechanisms must be clearly identified and in place before the program is implemented.

- *Transparency and outreach:* Outreach to make organizations aware of the SDPP is largely passive and relies on web postings on the HRDC web site. Key informant interviews indicated that information on SDPP funding is not very effective in reaching potential applicants.

Accountability

- *Use of grants versus contributions:* At the time of the evaluation, the SDPP was in the process of addressing a number of design and delivery issues raised by the 2000 report of the Auditor General on grants and contributions. One of these issues was to clarify the role of grants versus project contributions. The case study and key informant evidence indicated that both grants and project funding were contributing to the SDPP's capacity-building objectives. The case studies rated grants in particular as effective for building and sustaining the capacity of the national social non-profit community, and the key informants from grant-receiving organizations favoured the continued use of grants to meet the capacity-building objectives of the SDPP. At the same time, however, key informants also considered capacity-building project contributions to be useful given the ability of these contributions to provide successful project results and to stimulate organizational involvement and innovation.

- *Results-based grants:* A related issue is how grants should be addressed in a results-based environment when grants, by definition, have limited accountability requirements and no specific deliverables. Based on a review of the broader discussion of this issue, including the interdepartmental *Voluntary Sector Initiative*, the evaluation suggests that an alternative approach for grants might be to consider linking grants to results on an ex-post performance basis.

- *Implementation of Accountability Measures:* As part of the response to the findings of the Auditor General on grants and contributions, SDPP has introduced some new processes for project accountability. Key informants and focus group participants recognized the need for this effort, but also indicated that the new processes are imposing a significant administrative burden on funded organizations.

Cost Effectiveness

The evaluation was unable to address cost-effectiveness measures beyond the relative effectiveness of the funded activity areas, because the wide range of projects and their diverse outputs combined with working through intermediaries precluded a quantitative analysis of cost-effectiveness. The evaluation did, however, identify a number or areas where changes could provide more effective and efficient ways of achieving SDPP objectives. Two examples are the following:

- There may be room to achieve a better balance between prudence and administrative burden in accountability processes; and
- Developing a partnership web page could help to improve outreach and information dissemination and also help to broaden and solidify SDPP partnerships.

Management Response

The Office for Disability Issues and the Social Development Directorate would like to thank all those who participated in the evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP).

Evaluation findings showed that the SDPP has played a unique role, working to assist partners in the social non-profit sector to address the social development needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities, children and their families and other vulnerable or excluded populations; and, to promote their inclusion and full participation as citizens in all aspects of Canadian society.

We are pleased that the evaluation confirmed the many strengths of the SDPP, including its continued relevance and the impact and effectiveness of its funding activities. At the same time, participants offered a number of positive suggestions for enhancing the design and delivery of the program. We would like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the key issues raised by representatives of social non-profit organizations in the course of the evaluation process.

Program Relevance

The SDPP was established in 1998 to combine the Disabled Persons Participation Program (DPPP), and the National Welfare Grants (NWG) program, both of which predated the creation of HRDC in 1993. [The SDPP has also been funding projects formerly supported under the Child Care Visions (CCV) program since FY 2000-01. The CCV program was the subject of a separate evaluation.]

The SDPP evaluation showed that the Program remains firmly grounded in a number of the government's overarching policies with respect to social development and inclusion and furthers specific government priorities with respect to persons with disabilities, children and their families and other vulnerable populations. The SDPP also helps fulfill the federal government's commitments under the *Social Union Framework Agreement* and the *Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector.*

The evaluation found that SDPP is fully consistent with HRDC's mission "to enable Canadians to participate fully in the community beyond the workplace", and is unique in its role of ensuring the continued health and capacity of voluntary sector partners needed for HRDC programs and policy development.

Program Design and Delivery

The evaluation revealed a number of areas for improvement with respect to program design and delivery, including the need for more clarity concerning funding activities and the appropriate use of grants versus contributions. Participants also commented on the need for broader consultations with stakeholders in establishing funding priorities and a

more open process for soliciting and assessing proposals and allocating funding. In addition, the evaluation called for a reduction in the administrative burden imposed by new financial accountability requirements. All of the design and delivery weaknesses identified in the evaluation are being addressed in the SDPP renewal process and improvements are reflected both in the renewed Terms and Conditions and in new program management approaches.

The renewed Terms and Conditions clearly specify the activities that will be supported by the SDPP. *[SDPP project funding will be provided to support activities related to the generation and dissemination of knowledge; fostering collaboration and partnerships and participation in public dialogue/consultations on Canada's social policies and programs. Organizational funding will be provided to support activities related to strengthening organizations' capacity in the areas of governance, policy and program development, community outreach, organizational administration and management.]*

The use of grants and contributions are also being clarified. Under the renewed Terms and Conditions, contributions will be used for funding projects; grants will be used to support organizational capacity building. In order to achieve this clear distinction, it will be necessary to regularize the current allocation of funding for organizational capacity in relation to project funding (approximately 50-50). This will require a transition period of several years in order to convert $3.6 million in contribution funding to grants.

The evaluation found that SDPP grants have achieved significant results with respect to strengthening the capacity of national organizations in the social non-profit sector and continue to be an appropriate funding instrument to achieve the program's capacity building objectives. However, the continued use of grants involves some challenges with respect to ensuring accountability for results. The renewed SDPP includes new provisions to minimize financial risk and help ensure accountability for results when providing funding through grants and contributions.

With respect to a more representative and inclusive method for consulting its partners on priority setting, the renewed Terms and Conditions require that "Specific priorities and assessment criteria for project funding will be developed in ongoing consultations with government and non-government stakeholders and will be published as part of regular intake processes." SDPP officials will consult with partners within the federal government, in provincial and territorial governments, in academia and in the voluntary sector to ensure that the funding priorities remain current and relevant on a pan-Canadian basis. This broader and stronger network of partners will help to shape priorities and ensure the Program continues to advance common social goals.

The evaluation observed that a small number of organizations had received a disproportionate amount of the funding available through SDPP. In part, this reflects the fact that the number of national-level social non-profit organizations focusing on priority areas is currently unknown. In addition, since SDPP and its precursor programs have deep historical roots, many stable and mutually beneficial partnerships have been developed over time. These longstanding partnerships continue to make valuable contributions to the achievement of shared social objectives. Given that some of the organizations that have traditionally received SDPP funding have constituencies that are among the most disadvantaged in our society, they have little prospect of becoming

totally self-sustaining. In assessing applications for grants in the renewed Terms and Conditions, preference will be given to organizations that demonstrate commitment to several government priorities including identifying and addressing priority social issues; expanding networks and ongoing alliances with those with common goals; developing a sustainable funding base; etc. This may help free up more resources for new recipients over the longer term. At the same time, the increased focus on results will help ensure that grants yield demonstrable benefits on a continuing basis.

With respect to suggestions regarding expanded outreach and marketing of the SDPP, the Program has a relatively small funding base and focuses on multi-year commitments. The resources allocated for the SDPP have not increased since the program's inception. Thus, if the number of recipients were significantly expanded, the organizations that currently receive funding may well receive considerably less funding or no funding at all, with a concomitant strain on the trust and rapport that has been carefully nurtured over the years. This conundrum is the inevitable consequence of having enduring partnerships and a fixed amount of funding to respond to growing demand. The need to market the Program has to be balanced against the risk of creating unrealistic expectations among potential recipients. There is also a need to consider the administrative cost-effectiveness of reviewing proposals, the vast majority of which cannot be approved because of lack of resources.

Nevertheless, the Program intends to be more open and inclusive in its funding processes and will continue to expand the SDPP's reach to organizations that are well placed to help improve outcomes for targeted populations. The commitment, under a renewed SDPP, to establish funding priorities in consultation with a broader range of stakeholders and to publish funding priorities, assessment criteria, application procedures and deadlines on a regular basis will go some distance to improving the openness and transparency of the funding process.

The SDPP evaluation found that the rigorous implementation of new administrative measures for financial accountability, in response to previous findings of the Auditor General, appears to be undermining the Program's ability to pursue improvements in other areas, and is threatening the viability of some funded organizations. In response to these concerns, program officials are now working with their HRDC colleagues to achieve the right calibration between financial accountability regimes and effective partnerships. They are also working in close collaboration with representatives of the social non-profit sector to address major irritants in the funding relationship.

Program Effectiveness

The SDPP evaluation showed that the Program has been effective in achieving its objectives. It found that SDPP funding successfully contributes to the development and promotion of best practices and models of service delivery in Canada; strengthening community capacity to meet social development needs; and enhancing the capacity of the social non-profit sector to contribute information and knowledge on new and emerging social issues.

The evaluation of the SDPP, while noting the high quality of the information and knowledge generated by project funding, indicated that the impact of the Program could be enhanced if results were more widely disseminated. Although funding recipients appeared to be conscientious about sharing information and knowledge with their member organizations, they were less consistent in reaching the broader social non-profit sector.

To help improve the impact of project funding, the renewed Terms and Conditions will require that funding recipients identify appropriate plans to disseminate information and share the knowledge generated by their projects. The recent proliferation in Websites and electronic networking will no doubt facilitate these efforts. Subject to resource limitations, the SDPP will also continue to provide funding for conferences where sponsors can showcase results.

With respect to capacity building, the SDPP evaluation found that SDPP's organizational funding significantly increases the capacity of recipient national non-profit organizations, which in turn contributes to community capacity to meet social development needs. SDPP's funding has both direct and indirect impacts, as recipients lever funds from other donors, and use the legitimacy associated with SDPP funding in other fund-raising efforts. Case studies rated the provision of grants as particularly important for enabling participation and effective contributions to government policy development.

Since the SDPP is designed to achieve its long-term objectives indirectly through partners in the non-profit sector, demonstrating the impact of SDPP funding will be an ongoing challenge. However, the increased clarity with respect to the SDPP's objectives, activities and expected outcomes will help officials to measure progress and assess impacts. Also, the SDPP is currently developing a database on grants and contributions, which will facilitate continuous monitoring, analysis and reporting. The SDPP database will complement the "common system" that has been developed by HRDC to manage all of its grants and contributions.

Notwithstanding their confirmation of the continued relevance and effectiveness of the SDPP, participants in the evaluation expressed concern about the Program's relatively small budget (consists of less than 1% of HRDC's overall grants and contributions budget) and lack of visibility within the federal government. Although the Program is small and has consequently had a fairly low profile, it has remained aligned with the modern policy framework and the ongoing priorities within HRDC and the government at large. The process of renewing Terms and Conditions has already helped to raise the SDPP's profile and has helped create a broader understanding of the SDPP's objectives. Building on the momentum created by the renewal exercise, officials will continue to work to highlight the role of the SDPP in advancing governments' social goals.

Healthy democracies value the contributions of strong, autonomous intermediary organizations that bring together groups of citizens to advance policies that benefit all members of the society. The SDPP occupies an important strategic niche in carrying forward Canada's social agenda at the national level. The renewed SDPP, now built with greater clarity of purpose, and better tools to measure the incremental impacts of program investments, is in good shape to identify and nurture the innovative ideas and positive actions generated in the social non-profit sector.

1. Introduction

The Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP) of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) provides grants and contributions to non-profit, social organizations. The overall goal of the program is to increase social participation and inclusion of populations at risk, such as children, youth, families and persons with disabilities. The SDPP was created in 1998 and has annual funding in the order of $16 million.[1]

The evaluation of the SDPP was undertaken as part of the requirement for periodic evaluation of programs, policies and initiatives required by Treasury Board. The SDPP was also one of the programs examined by the October 2000 review of HRDC's administration of grants and contributions by the Auditor General.[2] The Auditor General's findings had a bearing on many of the evaluation issues examined by the evaluation of the SDPP. Also, at the time of the evaluation, the SDPP was in the process of responding to program areas in need of improvement which were identified by the Auditor General. Therefore, where possible, the evaluation also examined the current efforts to correct previously identified areas where program improvements were needed.

This report on the evaluation of the SDPP is presented in the following sections:

- Chapter 2 presents an overview of the SDPP program;
- Chapter 3 highlights the evaluation issues and the approach used to evaluate the SDPP;
- Chapter 4 examines the program impacts relating to the principal objectives of the SDPP and the sustainability of results;
- Chapter 5 examines issues of design and delivery;
- Chapter 6 discusses accountability issues; and
- Chapter 7 examines the issues of program relevance and cost-effectiveness.

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[1] This excludes expenditures by other HRDC programs that make use of the SDPP Terms and Conditions. For example, expenditures are reported as 22.3 million in HRDC's 2000-01 Performance Report, but are also stated to include "all programs using Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP) terms and conditions, these are: Voluntary Sector Initiative, some of Child Care Visions, some of the Federal Disabilities Initiatives and SDPP"

[2] Grants and Contributions, Human Resources Development Canada, Chapter 11, 2000 Report of the Auditor General of Canada, October 2000.

2. Program Description

The SDPP was created in 1998 by bringing together elements of two previous programs: the National Welfare Grants (NWG) and the Disabled Persons Participation Program (DPPP). The NWG program was introduced in 1962 and originally operated within the former Department of Health and Welfare. The NWG provided funding for social welfare research, social development projects, and human resource development in the social welfare field. The DPPP originally operated under the mandate of the Department of the Secretary of State. It provided funding to projects directed at changing policies, practices, systems and attitudes that inhibit the full participation of persons with disabilities in community life. The administration for NWG and DPPP was transferred to HRDC in 1996, and the two programs were combined into the SDPP effective April 1, 1998.

2.1 Program Objectives

The principal objectives of the SDPP are to:

- Advance nationally significant best practices and models of service delivery;
- Strengthen community capacity to meet social development needs;
- Strengthen the capacity of the social non-profit sector to contribute information to government and others on new and emerging social issues.

Approximately $16 million is distributed annually in grants and contributions by the SDPP, excluding expenditures by other HRDC programs that make use of the SDPP terms and conditions. The SDPP provides grants to support national voluntary social services organizations, and national organizations representing people with disabilities. The SDPP also provides contributions to assist voluntary organizations and academic researchers to conduct national research and development projects that focus on social development, social services and people with disabilities. The SDPP also provides contributions to support specific initiatives to build the capacity of national voluntary organizations and to conduct research on strengthening the capacity of the voluntary sector as a whole.

SDPP activities and objectives are in line with the following components of the Vision of HRDC:

- Forge partnerships with the voluntary sector, private sector, and communities;
- Build the capacity of communities, both geographic communities and communities of interest; and
- Provide an integrated approach to human development.

2.2 Organization

Prior to October 2001, the SDPP was delivered by HRDC's Social Development Directorate, which included three Divisions:

- Office for Disability Issues;
- Child, Family and Community Division; and
- Community Engagement Division.

In October 2001, the Social Development Directorate was restructured to form two distinct Directorates: the Social Development Directorate (SDD); and the Office for Disability Issues (ODI).

2.3 Partnership

The SDPP pursues its objectives in partnership with the voluntary sector. This partnership has included periodic consultation on program priorities and other issues with representatives of the voluntary sector often referred to as "reference groups". There are two primary historical reference groups, both of which emerged around the same time as the Scott Task Force in 1996. One was a disabilities reference group and the other dealt with broader social/policy development issues and eventually became known as the National Voluntary Social Services Organizations (NVSSO). These two reference groups have had direct involvement in priority setting and other consultative processes under the SDPP.

2.4 Logic Model

The design of a program may be described in terms of a *logic model* showing the relationship between a program's activities, the expected outputs, and the outcomes that are expected to occur if the program is successful.

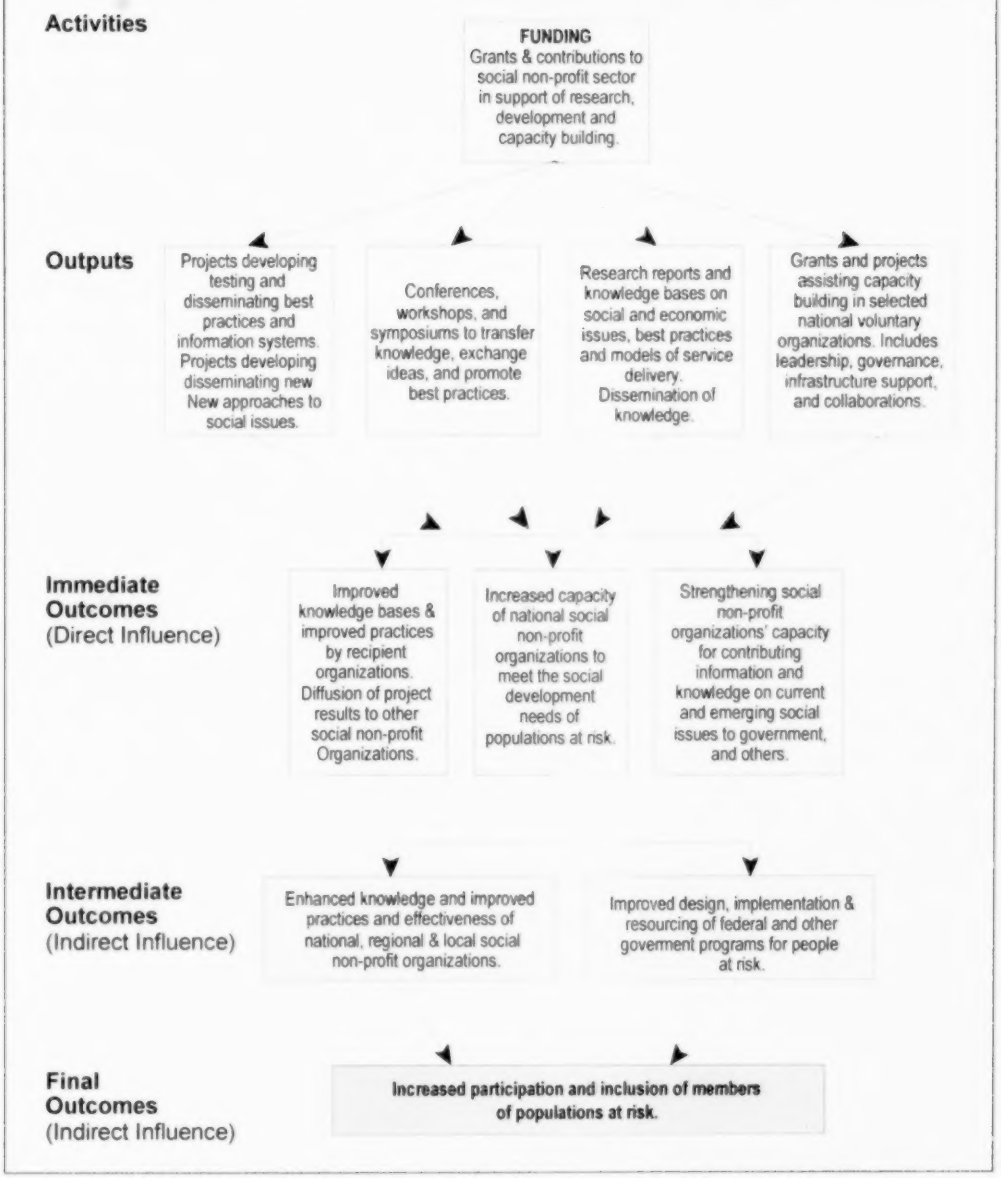
Figure 1 illustrates the logic model of the SDPP. The outputs of the SDPP are grants and contributions in support of the four groups of activities shown in the logic model. These activities are expected to result in the intended immediate outcomes of the program:

- Improved knowledge base and practices of recipient organizations;
- Increased capacity of national non-profit organizations to meet social development needs of people at risk; and
- Strengthened capacity of social non-profit organizations to contribute information and knowledge on emerging social issues.

These immediate outcomes are in turn expected to lead to the intermediate outcomes:

- The diffusion of enhanced knowledge bases and effectiveness throughout the social non-profit sector at all levels of jurisdictions; and
- The improved design, implementation, and resourcing of programs for people at risk.

Figure 1
SDPP Logic Model


Activities
FUNDING
Grants & contributions to social non-profit sector in support of research, development and capacity building.
Outputs
Projects developing testing and disseminating best practices and information systems. Projects developing disseminating new New approaches to social issues.
Conferences, workshops, and symposiums to transfer knowledge, exchange ideas, and promote best practices.
Research reports and knowledge bases on social and economic issues, best practices and models of service delivery. Dissemination of knowledge.
Grants and projects assisting capacity building in selected national voluntary organizations. Includes leadership, governance, infrastructure support, and collaborations.
Immediate Outcomes (Direct Influence)
Improved knowledge bases & improved practices by recipient organizations. Diffusion of project results to other social non-profit Organizations.
Increased capacity of national social non-profit organizations to meet the social development needs of populations at risk.
Strengthening social non-profit organizations' capacity for contributing information and knowledge on current and emerging social issues to government, and others.
Intermediate Outcomes (Indirect Influence)
Enhanced knowledge and improved practices and effectiveness of national, regional & local social non-profit organizations.
Improved design, implementation & resourcing of federal and other goverment programs for people at risk.
Final Outcomes (Indirect Influence)
Increased participation and inclusion of members of populations at risk.

The expected end result of the SDPP is the increased participation and inclusion of members of populations at risk. This end outcome is consistent with the Mission of HRDC, which is "to enable Canadians to participate fully in the workplace and the community".

As indicated in Figure 1, there is a decline in the direct influence of the program as one moves through the logic model. The SDPP has direct control over its funding of projects and organizations, but has less direct influence on the immediate outcomes resulting from its grants and contributions. In addition, the SDPP is only one of many factors influencing the intermediate and final outcomes that are the aims of the program. Where SDPP is only one of the factors that affect an outcome, the potential for an evaluation to detect program influences on that outcome is limited.

3. Evaluation Approach

This section presents the evaluation issues identified for the evaluation of the SDPP. It also highlights some of the challenges involved in evaluating a partnership program like the SDPP, the methods used to evaluate this program, and the strengths and limitations of the evaluation approach.

3.1 Evaluation Issues

Thirteen issues were identified for the evaluation of the SDPP and grouped into five categories:

Program Rationale and Current Status:

1. Are the strategic objectives of the program still relevant from governmental and departmental perspectives?
2. How well do the activities and resource allocations of the SDPP reflect the program's strategic objectives?
3. Do funding priorities (originally established in consultation with the Reference Groups) adequately reflect program objectives?

Design and Delivery:

4. Do the funding decisions reflect the program priorities?
5. Does the SDPP have processes dealing with information for potential applicants, processing of applications, and funding approval which are clear, comprehensive, transparent and equitable?

Accountability:

6. How well do the program systems meet standards for accountability?
7. Should information-collection and reporting requirements be adapted for particular projects and sponsors (e.g. different for small and large recipients)?
8. Does the SDPP have adequate resources for the full implementation of new financial and program accountability measures?

Achievement of Objectives:

9. Are the activities of the SDPP successful in identifying, developing and promoting nationally significant best practices and models of service delivery? Are there outcomes additional to those expected?

10. Do the activities of the SDPP successfully contribute to building community capacity to meet the social development needs and aspirations of populations who are, or may be, at risk? Are there outcomes additional to those expected?

11. Do all types of funded activities contribute effectively to program objectives (capacity-building, applied research, development and organizational support grants)?

12. Has the SDPP led to the establishment of effective capacity of the social non-profit sector for contributing information and knowledge on current and emerging social issues to government and others?

Cost-effectiveness

13. Is the SDPP cost effective? Could any SDPP activities be undertaken more cost-effectively.

3.2 Evaluation Methods

Evaluating partnership programs like the SDPP presents a number of practical challenges. The SDPP is designed to achieve its objectives indirectly through funding projects and organizations that are not administered by the federal government. Also, the intermediate and final outcomes of the SDPP involve responses from additional organizations or groups that are beyond the direct control of the program. As a result, in individual instances specific final outcomes of SDPP funding are not easy to track or measure.

The outputs of the SDPP are also difficult to measure. First there is the challenge of obtaining data through project sponsors. Second, the outputs of the SDPP are highly diverse. For example, the purpose of one of the funded projects was to reduce symptomology of war trauma in immigrant children, while another funded project was to improved building standards to accommodate motorized wheel chairs. Given the diverse range of projects, there are no major or common metrics (such as number of job placements) on which performance may be quantified.

Further challenges arose from the fact that grants represented 40% of SPDD expenditures in 2001/02 (and about 35% of SDPP expenditures since the start of the program). By definition, grants have no specific deliverables and are not auditable. They also have only limited accountability requirements under which information may be collected.

Prior to the evaluation, an international literature review of evaluations of similar programs in other countries was undertaken to help identify examples of current evaluation methods that could be useful in evaluating the SDPP. The *Literature Review of Selected Funding Programs Similar to the Social Development Partnership Program*[3] confirmed that there is no well-developed formula for evaluating partnership programs similar to the SDPP, but noted that some examples of methods used in other countries may be helpful.

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[3] *Literature Review of Selected Funding Programs Similar to the Social Development Partnerships Program*, Evaluation and Data Development, HRDC, October 2001.

In particular, the international literature review highlighted the importance of making effective use of qualitative information in the case of partnership programs like the SDPP. For example the literature review noted the importance of collecting complementary information from a range of informants in a manner that controls for the subjectivity of opinions. The literature review also highlighted the importance of using case studies and site visits to obtain in-depth information to help explore and complement the findings of the qualitative analysis and other lines of evidence.

The methodology used to evaluate SDPP incorporates the findings of the international literature review. Multiple lines of evidence were drawn from case studies, key informant interviews, focus groups, and a review of program-related files and documents. A broad range of key informants was interviewed. Case studies were also conducted, including many on-site visits. The collection of the case study information used a "rating" format to allow for a broadly based assessment of the degree to which various program outputs contributed to the achievement of program objectives. In addition, the on-site evaluation work used a technique identified by the literature review in attempting to confirm that improved technical systems, best practices and service delivery models were not only reported, but were also implemented. This involved determining whether there was evidence to support the claim that a specific improvement/output had occurred (e.g. gathering on-site, complementary evidence on whether a reported best practices model was actually being used and to what extent it was being used).

Case Studies

Case studies were particularly important to examining the effectiveness of the SDPP in achieving its objectives. The case studies were conducted by the firm of Goss Gilroy as a separate report. A broad range of 30 cases (i.e. 26 projects and four grants) was used in order to capture the diversity of project types and recipient organizations. The 30 cases spanned 17 organizations.

To help control for subjectivity and to quantify diverse experiences, the case studies included a numerical rating system for closed-end questions:

- Respondents for contribution projects were asked to rate their project's performance on a three-point expectation scale (1=Below Expectations, 2=Met Expectations, 3=Exceeded Expectations) for a range of performance indicators (e.g. relevance of information/report produced, impact on government's awareness of issues related to the project, impact on clients in terms of access to services, impact on clients in terms of participation in society).

- Respondents for grants were asked to rate the impact of the grant on the organization on a three-point impact scale (1=Low Impact, 2=Medium Impact, 3=High Impact) for a range of performance indicators (e.g. sustainability of the organization, capacity to train staff/volunteers, capacity to raise funds, and capacity to improve the situation of targeted clients in terms of access to services and participation in society).

To reduce bias, each case study included interviews with a representative of the organization receiving funds and a client or stakeholder of the funded project or organization. By including client and stakeholder views, as well as those of a representative of the sponsored project, the rating was more objective than one based solely on the views of the sponsoring organization. In addition, those who scored case studies also provided evidence that supported the rating. This evidence validates the ratings and enhances the usefulness of the ratings in assessing project impacts.

Key Informant Interviews

Thirty-three key informant interviews were conducted covering:

- Nineteen funded organizations (e.g. Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Canadian Association for Community Care and the National Network for Mental Health);
- Eight program staff;
- Two organizations potentially eligible for funding who had not applied;
- Two organizations whose funding applications had been rejected;
- Representatives of two provincial initiatives that performed similar functions to the SDPP at the provincial level (Ontario Trillium Foundation, which is an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, and the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA)).

Focus Groups

Unresolved issues emerging from the key informant interviews were further explored in two focus groups. Each of the focus groups involved five organizations. Issues examined through the focus groups included general reaction to the SDPP's mandate, terms and conditions, and the program's funding profile. The list of issues also included the program's current approach to consultation with potential recipients, funding priorities and the use of grants versus contributions. Participation in the focus groups included organizations from "Reference Groups" that the SDPP has historically consulted.

Samples for the case studies, focus groups and key informant interviews were independent of one another (i.e. organizations chosen for case studies were not chosen for interviews). In total, the evaluation reached representatives from 44 organizations associated with the program. This corresponded to more than a quarter of the 164 organizations that had received funding commitments as of 2000/2001. The evaluation was conducted in the last two quarters of fiscal year 2001/2002.

3.3 Strengths and Limitations of Evaluation Approach

Although the evaluation approach developed for the SDPP recognized and attempted to address the challenges of evaluating this type of partnership program and the diversity in funded projects and organizations, the following limitations should be noted:

- For the case studies, the choice was made to conduct a large number of case studies in less depth, rather than a small number in greater depth. Therefore, greater reliance was placed on interviews of case study respondents and their ratings of the program combined with the methods noted above to help control for subjectivity (i.e., inclusion of an independent project stakeholder or client in rating project impacts, taking the lowest of the two scores provided by a representative of the sponsoring organization and a stakeholder or project client, and gathering specific evidence on program impact).

- In a number of instances the information or data needed to confirm a particular outcome was simply not available or obtainable. This occurred in the case of leveraging and ongoing partnership impacts. Although the SDPP collects some information related to leveraging of contributions from others, a quantitative analysis of leveraging could not be undertaken at the time of the evaluation because the SDPP data systems were in the process of being modified in response to the need for improvements identified by the Auditor General. It should be noted that the unavailability of certain administrative/ operational data is a serious problem frequently encountered in program evaluations, and is not unique to the SDPP. The need to improve this situation is a very important issue for programs with results-driven accountability frameworks.

- The evaluation examined the relative effectiveness of funding different types of project activities, but was unable to explore broader cost-effective issues because the diverse range of outputs from diverse projects combined with working through intermediaries precluded a quantitative analysis of cost-effectiveness.

4. SDPP Impacts/Success

This section examines program impacts relating to the principal objectives of the SDPP and the sustainability of program results. The analysis draws together the findings of the case studies (conducted for 26 projects and four grants) and key informant interviews. Details of the case studies are documented in a separate report.

4.1 Advancing Nationally Significant Best Practices and Models of Service Delivery

The SDPP uses project contributions to advance best practices and models of service delivery. Dissemination of project results to the broader community is expected to occur through the sponsoring organizations. The following three example projects from the case studies illustrate the diversity of sponsoring organizations, nature of projects, and project size. Each of the examples indicates that the projects delivered results and impacts on populations at risk, or enhanced the capacity of organizations to serve and enable them. This was typical of the picture across the case study projects.

- **Peer Mediating/Organizational Mentoring**
  (Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada (BBSC), and YouCAN - $54,000)

  Description: The BBSC conducted a pilot train-the-trainer project in peer mediation and conflict resolution. The intention was for trainees (youth aged 12 to 18 drawn from BBSC agencies across Canada) to use the resulting skills to resolve conflicts among peers and at home.

  Results and Impacts: Ninety-seven youth from six BBSC agencies across Canada learned new skills in peer mediation and conflict resolution. A follow-up evaluation was done a year later and found that almost three quarters of the youth participants felt they had used the skills in resolving conflicts among their peers, and approximately 60% had also found the skills useful at home. At the same time the BBSC, which usually takes a one-to-one approach to meeting the needs of youth, realized that offering group workshops was a useful way to deliver services to youth. This led to a new attitude towards group programming for the BBSC. The project also allowed YouCAN to develop a more comprehensive program on conflict resolution and peer mediation, as well as receive organizational development consulting services from BBSC.

- **Exploring New Standards for Wheel Chairs and Scooters.**
  (Universal Design Institute - $47,501 from SDPP)

  Description: The Universal Design Institute is located within the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba. The project explored changes needed to codes and standards (particularly Canadian Standards Association and the National Building Code) to consider requirements of users of powered wheelchairs and scooters.

  Results and Impacts: The project showed, for example, that powered wheelchairs and scooters require more space to manoeuvre in and out of buildings. Findings were introduced into the Canadian Standards Association National Code, Winnipeg, and Manitoba in general, adjusted many of their buildings accordingly.

- **Play Program for At-Risk Refugee Children in Canada.**
  (Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) - $147,000 from SDPP, $62,500 from Health Canada)

  Description: The YWCA is a charitable, voluntary organization of 42 member associations operating in over 200 communities in Canada. The project was to develop a national training and implementation program for YWCA staff working with young refugee children and their mothers who have come to Canada through traumatic circumstances of war and persecution. The objective was to reduce emotional barriers to integration into Canadian society for young refugee children and their mothers.

  Results: A total of 354 children have gone through the play program and many have shown significant improvements. Children have demonstrated a decrease in symptomotology, including a decrease in urinary incontinence, improved concentration, better sleeping patterns and improved interpersonal relationships. Trainers who were trained at 6 YWCA sites are now equipped to use the program's lessons elsewhere. A manual was also produced. The first phase of the project was complete at the time of the case study. The next phases of the project were to address development of a national play program, training and implementation of the program, and the follow-up and evaluation of the program.

Case Study Results

As indicated in Section 3, the case studies rated each project on the basis of a number of performance indicators using closed-end questions. The questions were asked of both project sponsors and an independent stakeholder/participant, and the final ratings were based on the *lesser* assessment of the two. For each indicator, respondents were asked to choose whether the project (1) achieved less than expectations; (2) equalled expectations; or (3) exceeded expectations. Table 4.1 shows the average scores for each indicator across the reporting projects. For some case studies, the rating question was not relevant. The number of projects responding to each question out of 26 case-study projects is shown in the right-hand column.

Eighteen of the 26 projects examined by the case study analysis related to best practices and models of service delivery. All were found to have delivered on their proposed outputs. Seven of the 18 were assessed by both stakeholders and project sponsors as exceeding expectations and none rated below expectations. The overall average score was 2.3 out of a possible 3 (with scores above 2 indicating that the project exceeded expectations).

Looking specifically at the ratings for the impact on clients in terms of access to services and participation in society indicates that the projects were assessed as exceeding expectations in these areas (with scores of 2.6 and 2.3 respectively).

Table 4.1
Performance Indicators for Case Study Projects

Performance Indicator	Average Scores	Number of Projects Reporting
Relevance of information/reports produced	2.4	25/26
Impact on government's awareness of issues related to project	2.1	18/26
Impact on service deliverer's awareness of issues related to project	2.0	18/26
Impact on businesses' awareness of issues related to project	2.0	7/26
Impact on general public's awareness of issues related to project	2.2	9/26
Impact on your participation in government committees and task forces	2.3	14/26
Degree of implementation of best practices/models in service delivery systems	2.3	18/26
Impact on clients in terms of access to services	2.6	14/26
Impact on clients in terms of participation to society (e.g. workplace, social, education)	2.3	18/26
Average Score	**2.2**	

Source: *Case Study Report*

The review of project results conducted by the case studies also provided the following findings:

- **The majority of projects developed new and useful knowledge.** Projects developed new knowledge, including reports, publications, training manuals, pamphlets, web sites, conferences, speeches, presentations, and meetings. Most organizations and stakeholders felt the relevance of this information exceeded expectations. A few organizations indicated that they had not achieved their original project objectives, but that they had still accomplished many of the goals. For example, the Neil Squire Foundation stated they had not developed a win-win model for working with the private sector (on accommodation of disabilities in the workplace) as originally planned, but both the organization and the stakeholder indicated that they had been successful in developing positive relationships with the private sector and were still working on improving their model.

- **Projects tended to involve product development rather than new research.** Products delivered by projects were not new in the sense of being new additions to the collective body of available knowledge. They were, however, new to Canada or new to the participating organizations. The projects typically involved developing a new approach to existing models and communicating the new approach to other parties in other parts of the country.

- **Good dissemination of new knowledge occurred within project sponsor's network, but dissemination was weak to other service deliverers or private businesses.** All respondents indicated that their new knowledge has been disseminated throughout their own network (e.g. partners, web sites, constituents, newsletters, board members). Mechanisms to reach other service deliverers or private businesses were usually lacking, however, with the exception of the larger and more capable organizations such as the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) and the YWCA (see examples discussed above).

- **Implementation of best practices was mixed**. Implementation of best practices within sponsoring organizations following development projects was mixed. Certain organizations were successful at implementing the model developed under the project (e.g. YWCA), whereas other organizations were not necessarily targeting implementation at the time of the case studies. Some organizations expressed concern that they had received enough funding to complete their work, but not enough to implement it.

- **There is some evidence that organizations are using SDPP to leverage additional funds and support from others. However, there is a risk that this additional support is not fully incremental as program design safeguards are not in place to ensure incrementality.** Many respondents indicated that SDPP funds had helped their organization attract new partners, including other federal government departments, provincial governments, the private sector, and other non-profit organizations. For example, the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations (NVO) indicated that it had been successful in arranging for groups to work together that had never done so before. Some of the partners provided funds, while others provided in kind resources. Caution must be exercised in interpreting whether leveraged funds were incremental. This is because there are no program safeguards in place that provide assurance that project funding is incremental (e.g., sponsor attestation that the project would not have gone ahead without program funding). Consequently, there is a risk that projects are not incremental even when leveraged funds are identified.

- There is evidence that partnerships were created and sustained because of SDPP, but program safeguards are needed to prevent, or limit, overlap and duplication. The majority of partnerships created appeared to continue after the project was finished. Where partnership arrangements have been developed, there is a need for the program to develop safeguards to prevent, or limit, overlap and duplication of activities funded. For example, SDPP's efforts to plan and co-ordinate activities with Provincial and Territorial governments should be increased.

Key Informant Results

Key informant interviews were conducted with 13 project contribution recipients (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada, Kingston Independent Living Resource Centre, PLAN Institute for Citizenship and Disability), and with SDPP program staff and officers.

Key informant comments corroborated the findings of the case studies. In particular:

- **Projects are delivering value**. Key informants drew attention to a wide variety of example projects with direct impacts on support for the "full citizenship" of intended beneficiaries. Examples included:
    - Evaluation techniques specifically appropriate to Independent Living Centres;
    - Workshops and communications tools for improving the interface between the justice system and people who have traditionally had difficulty being served well by that system; and
    - Accommodation procedures for universities serving students with psychiatric disabilities.
- **Dissemination is an area for improvement.** Of the 12 organizations that commented on dissemination, six reported some form of dissemination of results from their SDPP-supported projects being discussed, and the other six reported no dissemination or that they felt dissemination was inadequate. Six of seven SDPP staff and officers (in six interviews) indicated they felt that dissemination was poor or needed improvement. The seventh said that dissemination should not be part of the program mandate. Two respondents from within the administration of the SDPP suggested that the program should develop web site materials specifically designed to disseminate program results, with one suggesting the use of an SDPP web site and the other suggesting the use of web sites of other issue-related organizations.
- **Projects have positive impacts on the vigour of organizations.** Respondents reported that projects had benefited the sponsoring organizations. Networks and partnerships had grown, organizations were convinced to take on new focuses, and success boosted energy levels. One Executive Director judged that the opportunity to generate projects had led the organization into areas of work that challenged the organization positively, and in ways that a simple grant would not have done. Key informants from another six organizations noted that the SDPP projects under discussion had drawn them into activity areas and partnerships.

Conclusions on SDPP Advancement of Best Practices and Service Delivery Models

The case studies indicated that project contributions provided by the SDPP have contributed to the development of new and useful knowledge regarding best practices and service delivery models, although this tended to involve developing/applying a new approach drawn from the general body of knowledge rather than conducting new research that added to the general body of knowledge. All of the 18 case-study projects in this area were found to have delivered on their proposed outputs. Of the 18 projects, seven were rated as exceeding their expected impacts, and none were rated below expectations.

The evidence also indicates that dissemination of the new knowledge tended to occur within the project sponsor's network, but often did not reach beyond that network to other service providers and businesses. Therefore dissemination of the new knowledge regarding best practices and service delivery models was identified as an area for improvement.

Project funding and the associated application process also generated additional positive impacts that included greater involvement and vigour within the organizations, and there were indications that project contributions helped to leverage new partnerships, assistance and/or contributions from others. However, such positive indications need to be tempered by the requirements for the program to have demonstrable safeguards in place regarding overlap and duplication.

4.2 Strengthening Community Capacity to Meet Social Development Needs

The SDPP uses contributions to projects submitted by sponsors and grants to organizations to strengthen community capacity to meet social development needs. This reflects an underlying assumption that there is a direct link between the building of *organizational* capacity, and the building of *community* capacity.[4] As the voluntary sector is both a service deliverer and participant in government policy development, it is assumed that strengthening social non-profit organizations of national significance also strengthens communities nationally and regionally.

All SDPP grants fall under the category of capacity building. SDPP grants are intended to provide a level of support to the recipient organizations and, as grants, do not require any specific output such as research or conferences. Given that grants represented 40% of SDPP expenditures in 2001/02 (and about 35% of SDPP expenditures since the start of the program), the objective of strengthening community capacity accounts for a significant part of the SDPP's activities.

Some of the SDPP projects also have capacity building objectives. The SDPP does not divide contribution projects into specific categories. Both capacity-building and the development of models of service delivery are related in concept, and a project may serve both objectives or play more heavily to one than the other.

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[4] A point raised by the "SDPP Disability Review of Organizational Funding", and "SDPP Disability Review of Project Funding", Discussion Papers prepared by Brian Bell, The Alder Group, for the Review Advisory Committee, ODI, June 2001.

SDPP projects that most closely fit capacity-building objectives are a mix of those directed toward improving individual organizations, those supporting consolidation and co-operation among organizations, and those directed to strengthening broader community capacity. The case studies included six projects with a strong focus on building capacity. Three examples of these projects and their reported results are as follows:

- **Five-Year Research and Community Building.**
  (Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) - $615,000 per year from SDPP matched by numerous other private and government sponsors for individual sub-projects under this umbrella)

  Description: The CCSD is a well-known and highly respected organization with a long history of promoting better social and economic security for Canadians. This project supported a program of research in the following areas: economic and social security in the labour market, the well-being of Canadian families, economic and social security in neighbourhoods and cities, and measuring social well-being. A common theme to the research was a focus on longitudinal or dynamic aspects of social/economic policy (e.g. related to the five-year funding time span).

  Results and Impacts: Over 38 reports have been produced to date, including the CCSD Fact Book on Poverty and Progress of Canada's Children. Many of these are published and are available on the CCSD web site. The project has allowed the CCSD to make a significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge because their research is widely disseminated to interested audiences through their web site, conferences, and community alliances and coalitions. The case study was conducted at mid-point in this project, and at that time the CCSD was working on the Community Social Data Strategy to share their expertise across the country and build community capacity.

- **Building Our Future: Capacity Enrichment and Self-Sufficiency in the New Millennium. (Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) - $69,000 – matched by $11,000 in kind resources from CAILC)**

  Description: CAILC is a national non-profit umbrella organization comprised of member Independent Living Resource Centres (ILRCs) mandated to promote and enable citizens with disabilities to take responsibility for the development and management of personal and community resources. This project sought to: 1) develop leadership capacity of Independent Living Resource Centres (ILRCs) by creating a Board development/ training tool for ongoing use; 2) train Board Chairs on how best to use the tool while mentoring new leadership at the Board level; and 3) assist ILRCs to create strategic business plans and local compendium binders.

  Results and Impacts: Local ILRC Boards now have the tools and confidence to undertake strategic planning at the community level.

- **Restructure/Regionalization: Phase 1.**
  (Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) - $30,000 matched by $20,875 from CCB regional organizations)

  ***Description*:** The CCB was founded in 1944 as a national organization to give people who are blind or visually-impaired a voice in their own affairs, and to provide rehabilitation through social and recreational activities. This project was to consolidate the CCB's nine provincial wings into four regional divisions to ease decision-making and save money.

  Results and Impacts: Enabled the CCB to achieve consensus among its members, enabling the national organization to move on to the next stage of restructuring.

Case Study Results

In addition to the results for case study projects summarized in Table 4.1, case studies were conducted for four grant-receiving organizations. Case-study respondents were asked to rate performance indicators for the grants under a three-point scale (1=Low Impact, 2=Medium Impact, and 3=High Impact). The results for each of the four organizations are reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2
Performance Indicators for Case Study Grants

Performance Indicator	Impact scores per organization				Average
Sustainability of the organization	3	3	3	3	3.0
Number of staff	2	1	1	3	1.8
Volunteer capacity of the organization	3	2	2	1	2.0
Capacity to train staff/volunteers	1	2	3	1	1.8
Capacity to raise funds	3	2	2	3	2.5
Capacity to organize activities	N/A	3	3	3	3.0
Capacity to produce information	2	2	2	3	2.3
Capacity to disseminate information	3	2	2	2	2.3
Capacity to produce tools, best practices	1	2	2	2	1.8
Capacity to implement tools, best practices	1	1	3	2	1.8
Capacity to participate in government committees and task forces	2	3	3	3	2.8
Capacity to improve the situation of targeted clients in terms of access to services and participation in society	2	2	3	3	2.5
Average Score					2.3

Source: *Case Study Reports*

As shown in Table 4.2, many of the scores are in the medium or high impact range (with an average score of 2.3 for the four grants). The rated impact was highest in three areas: the sustainability of the organization, the capacity to organize activities and the capacity to participate in government committees. The rated impact on the capacity to

improve the situation of targeted clients was in the medium to high range, with an average score of 2.5. The rated impact on the capacity to raise funds was also medium to high, with a score of 2.5. Interestingly, scores are lower for impacts on number of staff, volunteer capacity, capacity to train staff/volunteers, and capacity to produce and implement tools and best practices.

The case study review of the four SDPP grants also provided the following findings:

- **Grants were important to the survival of some national organizations, and minor to others.** Organizations have increased their capacity as a result of the SDPP funding, but the impact varies by organization. For example, the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO) used the grant to cover overhead, office expenses and salaries. Both the organization interview and the stakeholder interview indicated that NAPO would have difficulty surviving without these funds. On the other hand, the grant money represents a small portion of the overall budget of other organizations. For example, SDPP funding represented only four percent of the Neil Squire Foundation's (NSF) overall budget.

- **Grants tended to be used to support core costs.** Most respondents stated that the grant contributed to overhead costs, office expenses, and staff salaries. The grant money was also used to increase the organizations' capacity to do research and fundraising, and generally to increase the capacity of the board and the organization as a whole to do their work.

- **Grants were considered to be critical to leveraging fundraising and other assistance from other organizations.** Organizations reported that the grants were critical for them even where the grants were a small portion of their total budgets. Also the grant monies enabled recipients to leverage financial and other assistance from other organisations. For example, the Neil Squire Foundation reported that a portion of grant money was used to fund dedicated staff time to successfully raise funds from other sources. Similarly, the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) used the SDPP grant to fund staff time to significantly increase its membership and, therefore, total revenues from membership fees. In the case of the CWLC, their board does not consider it wise for them to commit to expenditures based on forecasted increases in membership revenues. The SDPP grant provides a means for them to invest in fund-raising at minimal risk.

Key Informant Interview Results

In addition to the key informant interviews conducted with project contribution recipients and program staff, key informant interviews were conducted with six grant recipient organizations (e.g. Canadian Association for Community Care, Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs, and Canadian Association for the Blind).

Key informants felt that the SDPP support was a significant factor in maintaining their organizations' capacity and relevance. The following are excerpts from three of the interviews:

> "SDPP helps meet the needs of organizations to re-define themselves. Capacity projects support the development of youth and organizational renewal. If the capacity-building mandate of the SDPP were eliminated, the results would be serious."

> "Nationally-focused organizations have to provide the influence; help build the capacity of regional and community-level organizations."

Caveats were expressed by key informants around the uncertainty of funding over time, and perceived low scale of funding relative to size. One key informant said that capacity-building projects are not very effective because the projects are short-term. She thinks there should be multi-year funding as "there is no safety net after the project ends". Another said that he is "not sure" the SDPP is effective in strengthening community capacity. He noted the need for "more money and continuity for citizenship." He also said that in the United States "infrastructure for citizenship is funded at all levels."

Key informants from social non-profit organizations also connected the SDPP with strong expectations of the federal government to promote adequacy and comparability of social services across the country, especially as embodied in the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) recently negotiated between the federal and provincial governments. Organizations interviewed saw a federal partnership with social non-profit organizations as an important element in those efforts. They also see the partnership as an encouragement to cost-effective sharing and collaboration among organizations. As one Executive Director noted: "A lot of work that needs to be done is pan-Canadian... Typically, provinces won't fund this kind of activity program." The same Director noted that it is cost-effective to have "One web site for services rather than 13."

Conclusions on SDPP Strengthening of Community Capacity

The case study evidence indicated that the grants tended to be used to support core costs such as overhead costs, office expenses and staff salaries. The grant money was also used to increase the capacity to do research, fundraising and the work of the organization.

The case-study grants received high ratings on their impact in three areas: sustainability of the organization, the capacity to organize activities and the capacity to participate in government committees. Key informants confirmed that the SDPP support was important in maintaining their organization's capacity and relevance. The case study evidence also found that the grants were important to the survival of some national communities, but minor to others.

The case-study grants were also rated as having a medium to high impact on fundraising and the capacity to improve the situation of targeted clients. The impact scores were lower, however, in the case of impacts on the number of staff, volunteer capacity, the capacity to train staff/volunteers, and the capacity to produce and implement tools and best practices.

The case study and key informant evidence also indicated that the grants enabled the recipient organization to leverage fundraising and assistance from other organizations, and once again this indicates the importance of having program safeguards regarding overlap and duplication.

4.3 Strengthening Capacity to Contribute Knowledge on Emerging Social Issues

Government guidelines on policy setting include requirements for consultation with stakeholder representatives on matters that may affect them. Consistent with this need, the SDPP's terms and conditions call for capacity-building to "... assist the development of selected national voluntary organizations... which may provide information to government and to other sectors or partners on a variety of current and emerging social issues essential to the success of programs, policy and services... " The SDPP uses project contributions and grants to organizations to pursue this objective.

Case Study Results

Table 4.3 shows the impact ratings for the projects examined by the case study analysis that are relevant to this program objective. The ratings indicate that the projects generally met expectations in their impact on businesses' awareness of issues related to the project (with an average of 2.0). The ratings also indicate that the projects tended to either meet or exceed expectations in their impact on the general public's awareness of issues related to the project (with an average of 2.2) and their impact on participation in government committees and task forces (with an average of 2.3).

Table 4.3
Performance of Case Study Projects in Contributing Knowledge on Emerging Social Issues

Performance Indicator	Scores per project	Average Score	Number of Projects
Impact on businesses' awareness of issues related to project	2 1 2 2 2 2 3 2	2.0	7/26
Impact on general public's awareness of issues related to project	2 2 3 2 2 2 2 3 2 3	2.2	9/26
Impact on your participation in government committees and task forces	2 3 1 2 2 2 3 3 2 3 2 3 2 3	2.3	14/26

Source: *Case Study Report*

The question for the case-study grants focused directly on the capacity/ability to contribute information to government committees and task forces. Table 4.4 reports very strong impact ratings in this area, with an average of 2.8 (i.e. close to the possible maximum of 3.0).

Table 4.4
Performance of Case Study Grants In Contributing Knowledge on Emerging Social Issues

Performance Indicator	Impact scores per organization				Average
Capacity to participate in government committees and task forces	2	3	3	3	2.8

Source: *Case Study Report*

Key Informant Interview Results

Many recipient organizations reported being regularly consulted by governments, agencies and private institutions such as banks. For example, disability organizations are important resources on accommodation issues. Respondents also reported helping implement policies and programs in educational institutions and the justice system. In their pro-active roles, respondents reported making various presentations before Parliamentary Committees.

Key informants corroborated the high rating in Table 4.4 by reporting that SDPP funds, especially grants not tied to specific projects, are key to supporting the capacity of these organizations to respond to, and actively participate in, calls for submissions and presentations.

Another method of information sharing is through project partnerships. Key informants both inside and outside the SDPP gave examples of partnerships developed through SDPP support. Among the 14 projects discussed in the interviews, only two did not involve partnerships. Partners included educational institutions, the justice system, unions, community organizations, and the private sector.

Social non-profit organizations also made the point that the SDPP's project support for meetings, conferences and symposia were key to sharing and contributing knowledge to government and other sectors. These events also enabled organizations to share ideas and develop strategies for reaching government and other sectors with information about current and emerging issues. An example of this was the generation of a Canadian Framework Policy for Community Economic Development through five regional forums, followed by a national forum in 2001.

Conclusions on Strengthening the Capacity to Contribute Knowledge to Government and other Sectors

The case-study evidence indicated that grants were rated as particularly effective in enabling organizations to participate in government committees and task forces, and this result was confirmed by key informant interviews. Also, fourteen of the 26 case-study

projects had outputs relevant to government committees or task forces. Of these, six exceeded expectations of stakeholders, seven met expectations, and only one fell short.

The project case studies also indicated that the funded projects tended to meet expectations in their impacts on businesses' awareness of issues. The projects also tended to meet expectations in their impacts on the general public's awareness of issues related to the project, and three of the ten projects rated for this impact were reported to have exceeded expectations in this area.

The key informant interviews indicated that information sharing was also occurring through partnerships developed with SDPP support. Also, the SDPP's project support for meetings, conferences and symposia was reported to be key to sharing and contributing knowledge to government and other sectors.

4.4 Sustainability of Results

The evaluation also took a closer look at the sustainability of results related to the three principal objectives of the SDPP and the related question of leveraging contributions from others.

Applied Research and Advances in Best Practices

Projects in this area are intended to lead to implementation of new practices or gains in knowledge, rather than separate ongoing activities. Case studies and key informant interviews found evidence on implementation of best practices results to be mixed. Where implementation was achieved, however, most of the benefits/products arising from the project were of a nature that would be incorporated into the practices of an organization on an ongoing basis. For example, the YWCA's child refugee program (presented as a example in Section 4.1) left the organization with new practices, a manual, and trained individuals to continue to apply and expand the use of the approach.

Strengthening Community Capacity

A distinction should be drawn between sustainable results for grants and sustainable results for project contributions focused on strengthening community capacity. Project contributions in this area share the characteristics of the applied research and best practices projects. Many are one-time efforts to fund re-organization, or to add a particular capacity, and are intended to have their on-going impact in the form of improvements to an existing organization. Partial exceptions include projects like the data development program undertaken with the CCSD. The data remains available for use when sub-projects have been completed and the intended electronic data access output (Community Social Data Strategy) has been developed. However, there may be questions over how to maintain the services associated with ongoing information dissemination.

With regard to grants, the case study and key informant evidence suggest that the capacity of national organizations would be less if the grants were discontinued. The loss of grant dollars would result in reduced revenue security for some recipient organizations, which would reduce the ability to make advance commitments to staff and future fund raising, leading to a potential loss of continuity and professionalism of such staff. The broader question of providing grants is currently under discussion through the interdepartmental *Voluntary Sector Initiative* and is discussed in Chapter 7.

Contribution of Knowledge on Emerging Social Issues

Case study and key informant evidence linked this objective closely with the increased capacity from grants. This suggests that the capacity of organizations to respond to or participate in government task forces or committees would be reduced if grants were discontinued.

Leveraging Contributions from Others

A question related to project financing is the degree of leveraging that SDPP funding achieves. Although the SDPP collects this information as part of its application process, no quantitative analysis of the information could be done at the time of the evaluation because the SDPP's program data systems were under development at that time as part of the broader response to the concerns of the Auditor General.

The case studies did collect information on leveraging when available. As noted earlier on page 14, although leveraging of funds did occur in some instances, the funds leveraged cannot be viewed as incremental.

Both case studies and key informants evidence suggested that SDPP funding helps to leverage funds and assistance from other sources by legitimizing the organization and thus enhancing the willingness of other organizations to make long-term commitments to fund raising.

Conclusions on Sustainability of Results

In summary, case study and key informant evidence indicate that SDPP projects are generating sustainable results by funding one-time projects that produce benefits/products that are incorporated into the existing practices of organizations. For grants, the case study and key informant evidence suggests that much of the capacity they establish would be curtailed without continued grants, which would reduce the ability of the grant recipients to respond to government committees and contribute knowledge on new and emerging social issues. Although the case studies and key informant interviews indicate that grants and contributions help to leverage funds and assistance from other sources, data systems under development did not permit the evaluation to conduct a comprehensive quantitative analysis of leveraging. This indicates the importance to assigning a high priority to ensuring that such data systems are fully operational.

5. Program Design and Delivery

This chapter examines issues of program design and delivery including the types of activities funded by the SDPP, the setting of funding priorities and funding decisions.

5.1 Types of Activities Funded

The SDPP terms and conditions list three types of activities as eligible for funding:

- Applied Research;
- Development;
- Capacity-building.

The Auditor General found that the activities listed in the SDPP terms and conditions lacked clarity, were confused with objectives, and were too open-ended. This finding is similar to some of the findings of the case studies and stakeholder comments gathered through interviews and focus groups.

The distinction between applied research and development is unclear in project funding.

Key informants and focus group participants found the distinction to be unclear between funding for applied research and funding for development. The general view among the key informants was that "a project is a project" (whether it is an applied research project or a development project), while funding for organizational capacity building or organizational support was seen as clearly being separate category.

The funding of academic research projects is an area identified for re-examination.

There were some divergent views on the idea of funding academic research. Four key informants were strong in their view that the SDPP should not be funding academic research. In their assessment, academics should use the sources of funding available for academic research. This point of view was debated in the first focus group, without a consensus being reached. Some participants offered the opposing view that some academic research projects supported by the SDPP were useful and would be unlikely to qualify for research funding from other sources because they were too applied (e.g. no control groups).

These divergent views suggest that this is an area of SDPP funding for the program to re-examine, including consideration of the pro's and con's and net benefits involved in supporting academic research projects.

Capacity building is considered to be the most important funding category.

Interview and focus group participants considered the SDPP capacity building function to be the most significant part of the program's mandate. In particular, the "consumer-controlled" disability organizations, a few of which operate at the level of an office and with a lone National Director, report that they could not exist without capacity-building contributions and/or grants.

5.2 Setting Funding Priorities

SDPP priorities guiding the allocation of funding were set at program inception, in consultation with key potential program participants. As noted in Section 2.3, two reference groups had a consultative role with the SDPP: one is involved in priority setting in the area of persons with disabilities, and the other (known as the National Voluntary Social Services Organization) has been involved in priority setting in areas with a broader social development focus. The priorities were:

- Social Development;
- Disability Issues;
- Community Inclusion; and
- Voluntary Sector.

Key informants from the program confirmed that the program continues to use these priorities for overall guidance, although some variations have been introduced in program documents. For example, the draft new Operations Manual states that "the focus of SDPP is on disability, children and their families and the voluntary sector."[5] Recent SDPP requests for proposals have also identified particular priorities for funding project contributions in 2002/03.

When the effectiveness of the current funding priorities was discussed in key informant interviews and focus groups, the comments indicated some areas of confusion and the questioning of certain priorities.

"Voluntary Sector" as a funding priority is questioned.

Key informants and focus group participants had difficulty with the "Voluntary Sector" as a priority. The majority understood the phrase to mean the SDPP funds only non-profit, voluntary organizations. Six of 19 representatives questioned whether it was an appropriate priority, and it was challenged at the first focus group.

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[5] Chapter 1, p. 10

Two types of concerns were raised. First, some respondents questioned the funding of organizations that "represent" or "advocate" for the voluntary sector. Based on available program records at the time of the evaluation, it appeared that approximately $4.5 million had been committed between 1998/99 and 2002/03 to organizations carrying out analysis and development of expertise in the field of voluntary organization. Some key informants and focus group participants also noted that the voluntary sector is an umbrella covering not just social non-profit organizations, but also organizations focused on the environment, sports, the arts, and so on.

The second concern was consistency. The voluntary sector was seen as a vehicle for funding, not a priority itself.

Applying the criteria of "nationally significant" involves some risks.

As a federal program, the SDPP terms and conditions call for applied research and development projects to be *nationally significant*.

Three of the 14 key informants interviewed about projects reported that the projects included multiple workshops across Canada. The case study projects also included workshops with national reach. This practice raises the risk that projects are "workshopped" nationally in order to qualify as "nationally significant". Although no specific projects were identified by the evaluation team as being inappropriately workshopped, the wording of the new Draft Operations Manual of the Social Development Directorate illustrates the risk. Project Officers assessing a project application are instructed to inquire whether "the organization is conducting activities that are national in scope".[6] This question makes "national significance" appear to be a test that is applied to an organization's activities rather than to the proposed project.

In comparison, Ontario's Trillium Foundation has a working definition of a "province-wide" undertaking, which offers another approach. In order to qualify for "province-wide" funding, an organization must demonstrate its activities will have effects in at least three of the Province's 16 catchment areas (or two catchment areas if the organization is located in northern Ontario).

5.3 Making Funding Decisions

The allocation of funds to individual grants and contributions was evaluated from two perspectives:

- Did actual allocations reflect program priorities?
- Is the allocation process transparent and equitable?

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[6] *Draft Social Development Directorate Operations Manual*, Chapter 1, Assessment, Section B, Checkpoint 1.

5.3.1 Did Allocations Reflect Priorities?

Evaluation of this question was challenged by two known issues acknowledged by the October 2000 report of the Auditor General. One was the lack of clarity in the funding categories and priorities described above. The second was the limited records for grants and contributions kept by the program. At the time of the evaluation, the program was in the process of achieving a better command of its grants and contributions files. The evaluation team worked with project management to derive a quantitative overview from a database that was still under development. However significant ambiguities remained, including funding classified as contributions in the database but as grants in other records. A further challenge was that the contributions budget for the SDPP was not reported separately for some years in either the Estimates or the Public Accounts.

As a result, expenditure breakdowns and totals provided in this evaluation represent hand-adjustments of Department records by the evaluation team, and should be considered approximates only.

About half of project contributions are going to a small number of organizations.

Twelve organizations have accounted for about 50% of the total project monies committed to organizations in the period 1998/99 to 2003/04 (accounting for about $23.8 million of a total of about $47.3 million). Table 5.1 provides the list of these 12 organisations. This means that about 8% of the 145 organizations receiving contribution commitments accounted for about half the funding committed to projects.

Table 5.1
12 Organizations Receiving 50% of SDPP Project Contribution Commitments from 1998/99 to 2003/04

Organization	1998 - 2003
Canadian Centre for Philanthropy	$6,348,315.00
Canadian Council on Social Development	$3,575,192.00
Canadian Association for Community Living	$2,661,341.00
Canadian Child Care Federation	$2,111,515.00
Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations	$1,978,516.00
Volunteer Canada	$1,515,590.00
Community Foundations of Canada	$1,355,919.00
Council of Canadians with Disabilities	$1,007,543.00
Child Welfare League of Canada	$972,989.00
Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs	$873,762.00
Canadian Centre on Disability Studies	$716,163.00
Canadian Association of the Deaf	$669,726.00
TOTAL	$23,786,571.00

Source: *SDPP data files*

The allocation of grants is driven by history.

In the case of grants, no key informant was able to provide a rationale for determining which organizations will receive them other than the historical continuity of the recipient group.

The list of grant recipients has remained almost unchanged since the inception of the SDPP. Based on key informant interviews, it appears that the difficulty in elaborating a grant allocation process for the SDPP is entangled with expectations generated from the history of the program.

Before the SDPP was created, some national social non-profit organizations received regular annual "core funding" through the NWG program or the DPPP program. When these two programs came under Program Review, many of these organizations made representations to the federal government to re-affirm its funding commitments. These organizations also became members of the reference group consulted by the Scott Task Force.

The allocation of grants also points to the SDPP consultation processes as an area to be re-examined.

The current reference groups consulted on occasion by the SDPP are various combinations of the original set of reference group organizations. Members of the reference groups have been almost exclusively organizations receiving SDPP grants (rather than those receiving only project contributions).

The historical basis for reference group membership poses questions regarding the need for transparency and fairness. For example, eight of 19 organizations selected for key informant interviews were not aware of the reference groups and their consultative role with the program.

Provincial organizations with similar mandates to the SDPP provide some comparative models. Both the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA) incorporate publicly identified, non-government groups in the design and delivery of their funding processes.

- Trillium "grants" are allocated to 16 catchment areas on a per/capita basis ($7 for each resident). Proposals for community grants are assessed and recommended by catchment "Review Teams", who are volunteers appointed for each area. Province-wide grants are decided by a Provincial Review Team. Members of all Review Teams are named on the Trillium Foundation web site.

- Quebec's SACA works with a Comité aviseur. This Committee represents 14 social non-profit organizations, and is co-coordinated by 6 representatives drawn from the sector. The committee consults with an Inter-ministerial committee on the design and delivery of SACA. The costs of the Comité aviseur are paid by the provincial government. The names of the organizations represented and the co-ordinates for the co-coordinating committee are displayed on the Committee's web site, linked directly to SACA's site.

There is also a need to ensure a co-ordinated approach with initiatives and agencies at the provincial/territorial level.

Given the activities of provincial organizations, such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA), there is a need to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach between the SPDD and other initiatives and agencies at the provincial/territorial level to guard against overlap and duplication.

Current co-ordination processes for the SDPP include the following:

- In the case of the Social Development Directorate, the Program Director attends regular meetings of provincial/territorial Directors of Child Welfare and provincial/territorial Directors of Child Care and Early Services to discuss priorities for research, share results of projects and to generally keep one another informed of their respective work. Also, through HRDC's Strategic Policy Group, the Social Development Directorate consults with a number of federal/provincial/territorial representatives to inform SDPP priority setting and to report on projects of mutual interest, including: the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Research and Information, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Early Childhood Development (ECD), and the Federal/Provincial/Territorial ECD Knowledge Working Group;

- In the case of ODI, the Program Director attends regular meetings with corresponding provincial/territorial Directors to keep one another informed of their respective work. ODI also informs priority setting, for example through the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Benefits and Services for Persons with Disabilities and meetings of Ministers of Social Development; and

- Officials of the Social Development Directorate and ODI also attend regional and national conferences related to social welfare (child development, disability, vulnerable groups) issues. These events bring officials into regular contact with provincial/territorial government officials and non-government organizations.

5.3.2 *Is the Allocation Process Transparent and Equitable?*

The evaluation examined the funding process at two levels:

- Public access and ability for potentially eligible applicants to be aware of and apply to the program; and

- The processing of applications.

The SDPP's funding allocation process was identified as a concern by the Auditor General. At the time of the evaluation, the Social Development Directorate and ODI were beginning to experiment with new processes to address these concerns and some of these new processes were also examined by the evaluation.

Information on the SDPP is not very effective in reaching potential applicants.

Outreach to make organizations aware of the SDPP is largely passive and relies on web posting within the HRDC web site. Several key informants expressed the view that there is limited access to information about the SDPP for organizations that are not already familiar with the program.

One of the two national organizations selected for interviews as eligible for SDPP funding, but not a recipient, had never heard of the SDPP. After being introduced to the SDPP through its web site, the experienced Executive Director of this organization found the information difficult to follow. The other potentially eligible national organisation was aware of the SDPP through having received funds in earlier years. However, this organization was unaware of the recent intake of Community Engagement proposals. It was qualified to submit a proposal, but the deadline had passed by the time the organization was contacted for this evaluation.

Program partners also are not always aware of funding opportunities under the SDPP.

Key informants among funded organizations expressed frustration with the quality and reach of program information. There was also evidence that participants were having difficulty making links between sections of the SDPP web site. One representative of a national disability organization was concerned that they had also been unaware of the recent intake of Community Engagement proposals. Another representative whose organization had previously been funded by ODI did not get the letter with information about a new proposed ODI intake process for 2002/03 (per briefing note to ADM Jan 16, 2002). Eight representatives out of 15 relevant interviews were critical of information provided by the SDPP. This concern was shared by five of the program key informants.

In the past the funding processes were informal.

Descriptions provided by SDPP management indicate the funding processes used in the early years of the SDPP were very informal. Applications were dealt with in a "continuous intake" process. An application would be received and reviewed by a Project Officer, then presented by that Officer to either the Program Manager, and/or the Program Manager and other Officers. Approvals were also continuous, leaving little basis on which to compare whether one proposal was more likely to meet Program Objectives than another. A Project Officer could be involved in both advising the applicant on drafting the application, and the decision-making aspects of a project approval.

Applications might be reviewed by a committee of Project Officers, but not necessarily with management participation. One manager reported never having had experience with a meeting considering funding approvals of individual projects.

In two cases, key informants reported that project proposals in the past were directed to HRDC, then re-directed to the SDPP Directorate with a top-down recommendation. In another case, two organizations were approached by the Directorate to carry out a project deemed important to the International Year of the Volunteer.

Applicants have also experienced some recent problems.

Many currently funded organizations expressed satisfaction with the old processes, but dissatisfaction with recent experiences. Six key informants described specific difficulties they had encountered in the process of application. For example, two organizations reported that, after long delays in the applications process, they were informed that their applications had been lost.

The evaluation found no single systemic cause for the difficulties cited. Part of this may be attributable to a shortage of funds available in the program when the applications were received, a problem linked to the historic practice of continuous intake of applications. However, other reasons for difficulties may be associated with high turnover that key informants reported observing among Project Officers.

New Processes – There is general agreement that the movement towards open, regular intake processes responds to the need for transparency, but it is too soon to say how well they will work.

At the time of the evaluation, the SDPP had also begun experimenting with new intake processes held at regular intervals. Program management seemed confident that establishing fixed dates for intake of applications, new assessment grids, and structures for review by committees and further review by management, would ensure that the best project proposals are approved and that the project funding processes become equitable and transparent.

When the evaluation was conducted, results from the new processes had not yet been implemented for a significant amount of time. Some of the organizations' representatives had experienced the application stage but not the whole process.

There was general agreement among key informants that the movement towards open, regular intake processes responds to the need for transparency. However, three informants raised one issue: some organizations place high value on the "flexibility" and "openness to innovation" which SDPP has shown in approving projects. The concern is that the new processes may restrict this flexibility by naming specific kinds of project topics for funding. New and effective ideas for meeting program objectives might find themselves ineligible or non-winners under the scoring systems. There is a need for the program to try to reconcile these issues.

6. Accountability

This chapter addresses the ways by which recipients are held accountable for SDPP funds received. It also looks at the use of grants versus contributions as a funding mechanism. The latter issue relates to concerns identified by the Auditor General and was considered to be a particularly important issue for the evaluation by SDPP management.

6.1 Accountability by Funding Recipients

Recipients of government project contributions are accountable for delivering on the proposed project commitments. In contrast, a grant involves no accountability for deliverables. There are, however, broader responsibilities by the funding agency to ensure the *bona fides* (i.e. legitimacy and good faith) of the organization that receives a grant, and responsibilities of the recipient to have provided truthful representations for anything on which the grant was based.

Following the Auditor General's 2000 audit of grants and contributions, Treasury Board approved a new Policy on Transfer Payments which tightened accountability expectations of departments for grants and contributions programs. This has resulted in a number of measures within HRDC affecting the administration of grants and contributions programs.

For the SDPP, the continued effort to improve accountability of sponsor organizations for project contributions is reflected in the new draft Operations Manual developed for the Social Development Directorate. The draft outlines extensive administrative processes for project contribution accountability. For example:

- A variance of more than 15% from predicted project cash flow during a reporting period (which can be as short as a month) may trigger a contract amendment process that involves a 17-point checklist;
- Verification of a claim involves an 11-point checklist;
- A Review of an Agreement involves 4 forms, including 22 checkpoints, plus an Activity Monitoring Report;
- A Project File involves a 19-point checklist.

The new processes for project accountability are imposing a significant administrative burden on funded organizations.

According to interview and focus group respondents, the new administrative processes for accountability are being vigorously implemented at a significant burden to funded organizations. For example:

- One representative of an organization with a long association with the HRDC programs (including SDPP) said "The burden of HRDC financial reporting is currently off the scale". He said his organization has had to assign a full-time person to handle the load.
- Two other organizations have had to modify their accounting systems.
- Two organizations are now being asked to account for person-days of staff work charged to projects; one has installed a time-monitoring system for staff to meet this requirement.
- Two others said the new measures were a disincentive to applying again to the program.
- One organization was required to break out FAX and photocopying charges from quarterly contracts with equipment suppliers.
- Five respondents said the changes would be particularly difficult for small organizations.

There were also reports of changes to financial guidelines for projects within the contract period:

- "There was no warning, no training in what their new auditing guidelines were. When a project finished, the auditor came in and said we could not have spent money on something that had been agreed in the proposal that had been accepted... This happened with two projects. We had a discussion with the auditor, came to some agreement, and then eight weeks later we get a letter saying we cannot do this and that."
- "The rules changed so that holdover [holdback] money required demonstration of contributions in kind from other organizations. This had not been asked for up-front."[7]
- One representative, who had previous government experience, said the contract reporting requirements had been changed in mid-project, at considerable pain to the organization.

The general concern was over-monitoring:

- Small affiliates with $12,000 contracts were required to produce monthly reports. "We're putting in an extra 12 hours a week, and in a month things don't change that much in a project."
- "Everything is done on a predictive cash-flow basis and any variance is a problem, cumbersome."
- "The focus should be on what measures succeed or fail."
- "At HRDC, there's a focus on minutiae, not outcomes."

[7] In this case, the project contribution was $84,000 over three years. The sponsor partnered with many organizations across Canada. The additional requirements meant that the final report was not completed until after the termination of the contribution agreement and the writing of the report was not funded by SDPP.

- "The administrative requirements are far beyond what is sensible... organizations are being depleted of energy."
- "Frankly, if something's not cost-effective for us, it cannot be cost-effective for SDPP... "

A further focus of complaint was that the application of new financial monitoring requirements appeared to be arbitrary to organizations. Two organizations reported intense scrutiny of events associated with projects. In one case a $78 dollar restaurant bill for 12 people was questioned; the Project Officer asked for the identities of the 12 people. A second case involved a proposal for a three-year project that included a national meeting in the third year. Although the national meeting was at least three years in the future, the organization was asked to identify who would attend, where they would be coming from, and which hotels they would use.

The burden of the new processes for project accountability may be more of a problem for smaller organizations.

Current SDPP practices make some allowance for smaller organizations. For example, the draft Operations Manual cites the "dollar value" of a contribution as one determinant of stringency in monitoring: "Agreements of a small dollar amount are monitored less frequently as they are generally less complex and of shorter duration". The dividing line between big and small is $50,000 according to web site information posted for the 2002/03 Community Engagement RFP. However, the requirements of the Operations Manual are still extensive for small projects.

The draft Manual refers to "the Single Monitoring Visit Report – SDPP 1011" to be used for "short-term projects that require a single monitoring visit". Administrative Document SDPP 1011 is titled "Single Monitoring Visit Report (for short-term projects)", and it is focused on a very thorough review of project finances. The review includes, for example, tracing at least five cheques "through the project bookkeeping systems to original documents (invoices, receipts, etc.) and to the accounting records."

The administrative document for the single monitoring visit includes only a relatively brief section in which Project Officers are instructed to "List objectives and activities... and enter your assessment of progress made to date". Thus the accountability emphasis is on the financial aspects of the project rather than project results.

Three contribution recipient organizations interviewed self-identified as "small" and reported concern over the burden of the new processes. Two other larger organizations volunteered a concern over how the new requirements would burden smaller organizations.

The cash flow control of grants exceeds Treasury Board guidance.

Treasury Board guidelines call for release of grants over time, consistent with the declared cash flow needs of an organization. This is intended to serve the cash-flow management of government (to avoid paying out all grants at the beginning of a fiscal

year). As grants have no specific accountability requirements – there is no obligation of organizations to demonstrate cash-flow requirements. A one-time declaration of the schedule for releasing the grant over the fiscal year is all that is required.

Program management reported requiring organizations to explicitly declare they need each grant instalment at the time it is due. While this is only a minor burden for well-managed organizations, it is not called for by the Treasury Board policy. Of greater concern is the potential for misunderstanding by staff of grant receiving organizations. In two cases examined, staff of large organizations believed that reporting requirements on the grants were greater than simply a short request. In one of those cases a staff member believed that the grant the organization had received was a contribution.

The SDPP may have room to modify some of its recent project accountability processes to reduce the administrative burden on grant and contribution recipients.

The Auditor General warned against excessive red tape in responding to his findings. Speaking to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, the Auditor General said of his report:

> I hope that all of this public debate will also stimulate some reconsideration of the design, operations, and effectiveness of these programs. I want to stress the importance of considering how risk is managed in any sort of re-engineering or redesign exercise. *It would not make sense to me for necessary changes to lead to excess tightening of the system and unnecessary red tape.* HRDC has a complex and varied set of programs to deliver. A balance will need to be established to meet the needs of recipients, to ensure adequate controls, to assess risk, and to deliver results for taxpayers. The department may have gone too far in one direction. Now we need to re-balance.[8]

Treasury Board's Policy on Transfer Payments is designed to balance accountability requirements with a reasonable administrative approach. It offers this description of due diligence:

- Due diligence (diligence raisonnable) - reasonable care or attention to a matter, which is good enough to ensure that provided funding would contribute to the intended objectives of the transfer payment and stand the test of public scrutiny. This includes:
  - being guided by an understanding of the purpose and objective to be achieved;
  - supported by competence and capability of information, resources and skills;
  - a shared commitment to what needs to be done and an understanding of respective authorities, responsibilities and accountabilities; and
  - ongoing monitoring and learning to ensure reassessment and effectiveness.[9]

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[8] Denis Desautel, Auditor-General of Canada, before the Standing Committee on Human Resource Development and Status of Person With Disabilities, March 23, 2000.

[9] *Policy on Transfer Payments*, Treasury Board, June 2000.

In addition, the following specific guidance is offered by the Policy:

> 8.3.2 ... Contribution agreements should call for at least an interim and a final accounting of the use of funds and the results achieved, *except for small contributions of short duration where the minimum requirement would be a final accounting (including provision for reporting against performance objectives).*
>
> 8.3.3 ... *Where advances are issued monthly and accounting for them monthly is neither practical nor cost-effective, they may be accounted for bi-monthly or quarterly, provided that there is reasonable assurance that the funds are being spent for authorized purposes.*
>
> 8.3.4 Departments should determine the required frequency of accounting by recipients that *minimizes the administrative costs of itself and the recipient,* taking into account appropriate risk factors, the likelihood of failure or diversion of funds by the recipient to other purposes, and *the department's previous experience with the recipient.*[10]

As indicated in 8.3.4, consideration of the department's previous experience with the recipient does not necessarily mean that no previous experience should be treated as the worst case. For small expenditures, a cost-effective approach might be to give the benefit of the doubt to organizations whose *bona fides* had been verified, and who had no previous default record.

In addition, the *Guide to Improved Funding Practices* by the TBS Voluntary Sector Project Office underlines the importance of Government respect for "the realities and values of the voluntary sector"[11], and says that Government's objective should be that:

> ... a "risk-based" approach, based on modern financial management principles, is used to assess and monitor initiatives, and is proportionate to the level of funding and the size and nature of the organization.[12]

6.2 Funding Mechanisms: Grants versus Contributions

Grants are a major component of the SDPP and accounted for 40% of SDPP expenditures in 2000/01. The relative use of grants versus contributions is an issue identified for the SDPP in the Auditor General's 2000 audit of grants & contributions. The Auditor General found that little guidance was provided to project officers on important questions, such as when to use grants and when to use contributions as funding vehicles.[13]

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[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid, p.6
[12] Ibid, p.10
[13] Par. 11.282 to 11.288 of the September 2000 report by the Office of the Auditor General.

The issue of grants for organizational support was one of the factors leading up to the establishment of the SDPP.

Following the government's announced intention to end core funding of national social non-profit organizations in 1993, several organizations in the disability issues and social welfare sectors that had received "core-funding" through the NWG program and the DPPP began efforts to raise government and public awareness of the importance of the contributions made by these organizations to Canadian society. The government established the Federal Task Force on Disability Issues, known as the Scott Task Force which recommended providing "assured core funding". The recommendation ultimately led up to a restoration of grants, which were in turn consolidated by the SDPP.

More recently, in 2001, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development called upon the government to "consider the desirability of providing funds to cover the core operating costs of national disability organizations."[14]

Key informants from grant-receiving organizations favour a continued use of grants to meet the capacity-building objectives of the SDPP.

Key informants from five grant-receiving organizations were asked directly if their organizations would accept multi-year contributions for capacity-building as a substitute for organizational support grants. The response was largely negative. Three organizations responded "no", one was prepared to consider it, and the fifth responded positively only after a lengthy outline of the conditions which would make such a substitution acceptable.

The respondents noted that capacity-development project contributions (as opposed to grants) raised concerns about sustainability. Once an organization has success in increasing its organizational capacity (for example, by developing an interactive web site, or a disability registry) it may not have the resources to maintain the new capacity in an effective way.

The respondents also favoured grants because grants provided a more reliable and flexible source of funds, compared to project contributions. The difficulty of planning for change and implementing change on a short-term basis was raised, as was the uncertainty of follow-up funding when projects should be taken to a new phase. Five organizations out of 15 relevant interviews volunteered this type of concern. One Executive Director described a current two-year project, which will need an estimated two additional years of follow-up work by saying it was "not enough, not a good investment.... Right now we're investing in pieces." Another reported that a few days earlier had been spent "trying to fit activities into a [project] proposal... a bit difficult."

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[14] "A Common Vision", Standing Committee of Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons With Disabilities" June 12, 2001, http://www.parl.gc.ca/InfoComDoc/37/1/HUMA/Studies/Reports/report4-huma/page5-e.htm

Support for grants as a funding mechanism did not mean a lack of appreciation for project contributions. Key informants welcomed what they saw as successful project results, and one Executive Director reported that work on various projects had stimulated positive change within his/her organization more than would likely have occurred with a grant.

The issue of grants and funding mechanisms is being revisited through the Voluntary Sector Initiative.

The question of SDPP use of grants to support organizations occurs within a larger debate for the federal government as a whole. This debate is currently being discussed on an interdepartmental level through the *Voluntary Sector Initiative*, which is a $94.6 million five-year interdepartmental program. The Initiative addresses both disability organizations and other voluntary sector organizations.

The central issue in the larger debate is how grants should be addressed in a results-based environment where *carte blanche* government funding of organizational core costs is no longer deemed the best approach; but where social non-profit organizations may be unable to raise sufficient funds to meet government expectations for partnership in policy development and program implementation. This central issue is particularly relevant to the SDPP because grants can be used to support core organizational costs that cannot be addressed by project contributions (project contributions address incremental project-related costs only). Also, the case study and key informant evidence indicates that grants contribute to sustaining recipient organizations and their capacity to organize their activities, raise funds, participate in government task forces and committees, and improve the situation of target clients.

An alternative approach for grants may be to consider linking grants to results on an ex-post performance basis.

One element of the Voluntary Sector Initiative was a commitment to undertake a study, through Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) of funding practices and policies.[15] The Treasury Board Voluntary Sector Project Office has recently released a "Guide to Improving Funding Practices".[16] The guide stresses the importance of the Government's support for the organizational stability of its voluntary partners:

> Community organizations must be able to sustain themselves over time, if they are to function in the long term. They must also be able to maintain their capacity, if they are to serve their clients and communities well.[17]

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[15] Government of Canada Response to "Reflecting Interdependence", 6th Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons With Disabilities, November 1999. http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/dept/general/response.shtml

[16] *Guide to Improving Funding Practices*, Treasury Board Secretariat, Voluntary Sector Project Office, January 31, 2002. The "Guide" does not currently have status as Treasury Board Policy, but is a product of a Treasury Board lead team that may provide a foundation for the Government's commitment to develop a "Code of Funding Practice" for its partnerships with the Voluntary Sector.

[17] *Guide to Improving Funding Practices*, p. 13.

While no conclusions have been reached as yet on changes or clarification to Treasury Board funding policy, a *Guide to Improving Funding Practices* by the Treasury Board Secretariat Voluntary Sector Project Office offers some key principles and suggestions. These include:

- That government must expect to pay a fair share of the cost for services rendered, including partnerships in policy development and service delivery.
- There is a return to investment in voluntary sector capacity, and it can be measured in results, rather than through expenditures.

Following the principles of the *Guide to Improved Funding Practices*, a useful approach might be to consider linking grants to results on an *ex-post, performance basis*, with fixed longer-term life between reviews (to preserve the advantages of continuity and flexibility).

7. Continued Relevance and Cost-Effectiveness

This chapter examines the continued relevance of the SDPP to HRDC and broader government objectives, and the cost-effectiveness of the program.

7.1 Continued Relevance of the SDPP

The SDPP continues to be relevant to the Mission of HRDC.

The HRDC mission statement leads with the objective "*... to enable Canadians to participate fully in the workplace and the community*". This is consistent with the overall goal of the SDPP, which is to increase participation and inclusion of members of populations at risk. Also, the scope of the SDPP goes beyond the workplace to address broader participation ("full citizenship") in the community.

The SDPP has a strategic role in HRDC's emphasis on partnerships.

HRDC places strong emphasis on partnerships to implement its programs, and many of its programs rely on partners in the social non-profit sector. The department's emphasis on partnership is found in its mission statement and reinforced by frequent statements in the current Plans and Priorities:

> "... We will forge partnerships with the provinces and territories, businesses, labour organizations, *voluntary organizations and community groups* to ensure that Canadians are well served... " (HRDC Mission Statement)

> "*We will take an integrated approach to human development* as we assist Canadians, often when they are at risk. This will involve designing and delivering programs and services, *usually in partnership with others...* " (HRDC Mission Statement)

> *"... the need to foster partnerships with the voluntary sector, Aboriginal peoples, business and local communities are key to the work HRDC does to help Canadians participate more fully in the workplace and community.* "[18]

The SDPP's role in funding organizations and projects (particularly capacity-building projects) in the social non-profit community is particularly relevant to HRDC's partnerships approach. Voluntary organizations whose constituency is "Canadians who may be at risk" are unlikely to command the financial resources to be effective partners for the department. The SDPP appears unique in addressing the long-term viability and capacity of partner voluntary organizations to fulfil expected partnership roles. This also

[18] 2002/03 Report on Plans & Priorities, pg. ii

reflects the broader issue of the federal government's relationship with the voluntary sector, which is under discussion through the Voluntary Sector Initiative.

The SDPP's overall goal of increasing social participation and inclusion of populations at risk is also relevant to the government's Skill's Agenda.

The commitment to skills and learning is at the foundation of Canada's Innovation Strategy, which was launched in February 2002. Giving children and youth the best possible start in life and encouraging the participation of those facing barriers to labour market participation are among the important goals and objectives the government has set forth in its call for collaborative action to keep Canada economically strong and socially sound.

The SDPP is consistent with fulfilling the federal government's commitments under the federal-provincial Social Union Framework Agreement.

Section 5 of the Social Union Framework Agreement speaks to the use of federal spending power in improving social programs for Canadians, with specific reference to transfers to organizations: "*Another use of the federal spending power is making transfers to individuals and to organizations in order to promote equality of opportunity, mobility, and other Canada-wide objectives.*"

In providing grants and contributions to organizations in the social non-profit community, the SDPP is consistent with the agreed mechanisms by which the federal government can channel federal spending power to promote Canada-wide objectives. The SDPP can also be considered to reflect a federal role in the area of applied research and development of models and best practices. There are clear economies of scale in having research and development performed and shared nationally, rather than undertaken separately in thirteen provincial/territorial jurisdictions.

There is an ongoing need to safeguard against overlap and duplication with provincial initiatives and agencies that have a mandate similar to the SDPP.

Although the evaluation did not conduct a review of provincial programs with mandates similar to the SDPP, to some extent the question of whether the SDPP is duplicating what provinces are already doing can be examined by examining the two provincial initiatives identified by the evaluation as similar to the SDPP—Quebec's SACA and Ontario's Trillium Foundation:.

- **Capacity Building:** SDPP capacity building is directed either at national organizations (e.g. grants); at reorganizing on a national basis (e.g. contribution case study of reorganizing Canadian Council for the Blind from a provincial basis to a regional basis); or in enhancing shared capacity of the social non-profit sector nationally (e.g. contribution case study of Community Social Data Strategy by Canadian Council on Social Development).

SACA and Trillium both have comparable functions at the provincial levels. SACA funds the global missions of community organizations (grant-like approach), plus makes contributions to projects by such organizations. Key informants for SACA felt that virtually all of the funding could be categorized as social development. Trillium's program goals include enhancing volunteerism and increasing the effectiveness of organizations. Approximately half of Trillium's expenditures go to human and social services areas.

Although the SDPP is focused on projects of national significance and national level organizations, and the provincial programs tend to focus instead at even the sub-provincial level, both have an interest in capacity building.

- **Applied Research and Development:** This activity is a principal part of the SDPP's mandate, but not directly addressed by Trillium and SACA. However, Trillium and SACA do have objectives which permit them to fund organizations to explore new methods of service delivery. For example SACA funds "better understanding of community action". Although the SDPP's mandate is more focused on applied research supporting innovation, and the SDPP screens project applications in these categories for national significance, all three can fund efforts to explore new methods of service delivery.

Even this brief review of two provincial initiatives suggests that there is a need for safeguards against overlap and duplication. Current safeguards in this area include the following:

- The SDPP does not fund provincial/regional organizations, and only funds pan-Canadian organizations that are umbrellas of regional members. This helps to guard against overlap and duplication because provincial/local organizations are not likely to be involved in pan-Canadian activities on their own; and
- The Social Development Directorate, and ODI have established a number of links/processes for consulting on priorities and sharing research results with corresponding provincial/territorial directors and officials (as discussed in Section 5.3.1).

For further information on the Ontario Trillium Foundation and SACA see Appendix A.

The strategic roles of the SDPP are inconsistent with the low profile of the program.

The strategic roles of the SDPP seem inconsistent with the low profile it has received within HRDC in past years. For example, the budget level for project contributions has gone unmentioned in the department *Plans & Priorities* documents of some years.

7.2 Cost-Effectiveness of the SDPP

As noted in Chapter 3, the evaluation was not asked to address cost-effectiveness measures beyond the relative effectiveness of the funded activity areas (addressed in Chapter 5). While a number of improvements in design and delivery are suggested, the absence of homogenous outputs from diverse projects and working through intermediaries precluded a quantitative analysis of cost-effectiveness.

Key informants were asked for suggestions on how to do things better. Most of the responses to this question focussed on the design and delivery issues and are reflected in previous chapters.

Establishing a partnership web page could help to broaden and solidify SDPP partnerships.

A partnership web page is one additional area of potential improvement in effectiveness that emerged from both key informant interviews and from the comparison of the SDPP with the provincial programs. Access to SDPP information could be improved and SDPP partnerships could be more easily broadened and solidified with a partnership web site that contains the following:

- An up-to-date organizational chart of program staff;
- Information about grants and contributions that the SDPP has funded recently;
- A description of the role of the Reference Group and a list of current members;
- A catalogue of project reports and organizational support innovations; and
- Current contact information for organizations, which have received SDPP funding.[19]

Similar communication ideas may be garnered from the usage of web sites by provincial programs similar to the SDPP.

[19] Both SACA (Quebec) and Trillium (Ontario) offer Website information of this nature.

Appendix A: Comparable Provincial Programs

Evaluation interviews included two provincial programs with mandates comparable to the SDPP. Both the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA) incorporate publicly identified, non-government groups in the design and delivery of their programs. This Appendix provides additional information on the two programs, gathered from the interviews and document review.

Trillium Foundation, Ontario

Background and Current Status

The Foundation provides support and policy direction as an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. Until 1998, Trillium had a budget of $17m and funded only social services. In 1999 the annual funding was raised to $100 million. The source of funds is Charitable Gaming. Every funding contract has a requirement that Trillium be given recognition as a funding agent. If something is funded by the Government, Trillium does not fund duplication or enhancement.

Trillium management feels that "Human and Social Services" funding fits quite well within the mandate of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. For example, the Government policy outline, "Ontario's Promise", is linked to Trillium funding of programs for children and youth.

Objectives

There are currently eight Program Goals. It was suggested by the Director of grants that the Foundation will "probably be looking at a way to increase the focus":

1. Create Economic Opportunities	5. Foster Community Harmony and Safety
2. Contribute to Community Vitality	6. Find Community Solutions
3. Increase Access	7. Make Better Use of Community Facilities or Land
4. Enhance Volunteerism	8. Increase the Effectiveness of Organizations

Funding

Trillium funds are directed to four areas:

- Arts and Culture (10-20%);
- Environment (5-15%);
- Sports and Recreation(10-20%);
- Human and Social Services (45-55%)

Trillium provides 3 types of funding:

1) Project (35-45%);
2) Capital (15-25%); and
3) Operational (maximum of 5 years, 35-45%).

In 1999/2000,

- $80.5 million was "pledged" for Community ($64.5m) and Province-wide ($16m) grants;
- $7.6 million was spent on administration; and
- $9.6 million was "deferred for pledging in the 2000/2001 fiscal year".

The Annual Report forecasted administration costs would rise to $10 million in 2000/2001.

In 1999/2000 Trillium received 3200 applications. A total of 1,396 grants were approved and 535 applications were carried forward to following year. There were 100 staff to administer the Program.

New policies

In order to have regular information to feed into the Program's own reporting system, funding recipients are asked to report on several areas, including:

- Leveraging;
- Reach;
- Materials produced/events held;
- Media;
- Dissemination;
- Volunteers
- Training
- Impact on Organization

Funding Process

The funding criteria are set out in the application guidelines. Applicants need three references. The Program Officers discuss applications with the Program Manager and each application is sent to a local volunteer review team (16 teams in total). The "Lead Reviewer" (also a volunteer) presents the applications to the committee, which makes a recommendation to the Provincial Board of Directors.

Monitoring

The "letter of agreement" is a contract spelling out the amount of funding, the expected deliverables. The number of reports required in a contract depends on the nature of the deliverables and the length of the contract. Some contracts will require only a final report; multi-year contracts may require reports as often as every 6 months; there may be requirements for specific reports on specific deliverables. Audited financial statements are required only for funding greater than $100,000.

In multi-year contract reports, organizations are asked to report differences between budgeted spending and actual spending only if the difference is more than $1000 during the reporting period. They are also asked to report budget changes expected in the next reporting period.

Dissemination

Management says the dissemination of results is not a requirement common to funding contracts, but "it could be expected" in some.

Achievement of Program Objectives

A random sample of 506 Trillium clients has been conducted to establish the impact of grants (and grant application rejections).

Information Available from Trillium Web-site

By March 19, 2002, the Website had information on over 80 grants approved since Feb 1, 2002. Latest Annual Report on the Website is for 1999/2000. It presents complete information on grants for that year. Twenty per cent of grants each year are devoted to Province-wide undertakings. To qualify as Province-wide the application must involve activities in at least 3 of the 16 catchment areas.

- Community grants can be up to $75,000/year for a maximum 5 years.
- Province-wide grants can be for up to 5 years, at a maximum $250,000/year.
- Capital grants in either community or Province-wide categories are for a maximum $75,000.
- Trillium charges its Fund for the full amount of a multi-year grant in the year the grant is first made.

The Website informs potential applicants that application review for a grant of up to $25,000 can take 3 months, an application for more than $25,000 can take up to 6 months.

In a given year, about $90m is distributed (administration is about 10%, as it is in SACA), of which at least 45% is for Human and Social Services (about $40.5m), of which at least 35% is operational funding (about $14.2m).

While the program provides for grants of up to 5 years, the following multi-year commitments reported in the 1999/2000 Annual Report indicate that, at least for that year, not many grants were extending beyond four years. Total Grants are payable to various organizations in the fiscal year ending March 13 as follows:

Year	Grants
2001	$37,511,413
2002	$15,959,600
2003	$5,740,300
2004	$1,240,400
2005	$148,700
Total	$60,600,413

The Website reports that multi-year grants entail at least one Progress Report each year, while grants of a year or less may only require a Final Report (3 months following project completion). The Website "Reporting Form for Multi-year Grants" (October 2001) is a 10-page document that allows organization to report largely by responding to check lists.

A page of financial charts is attached to fill out for each reporting period. The page covers 3 years of expenditures in 5 major categories: Salaries and benefits, Services, Administration, Capital, and Miscellaneous. The financial report form urges organizations to contact their Program Manager if a variance of over $1000 occurs in a reporting period. The Website also links to a guide for reporting "The Ontario Trillium

Foundation's Reporting Guidebook." The Website lists current members of the catchments area Review Teams. The information is very comprehensive and easy to use and read.

Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA)

Background and Current Status

SACA was established in 1995 and is funded by on 5% of Quebec casino earnings. Another 1% goes to international aid, also managed by SACA for the Ministry of International Relations. Beginning in April 2002, SACA is implementing significant policy changes.

For seven years it has operated in three streams:

1. Funding for "the collective defense of rights". Up to $50,000 for groupings of organizations, up to $36,000 for independent organizations. Funds are non-recurring.
2. Funding to priority services. Up to $48,000 for groupings of organizations, up to $24,000 for independent organizations.
3. Funding for development projects of independent community action and one-time projects such as colloques, evaluations, analyses, etc. Individual project, $25,000, joint project $50,000 (can last up to 3 years).

Certain restrictions apply:

- The purposes cannot be the re-distribution of income, relieve organizational deficits or to buy furniture; and
- Organizations cannot have any political, religious or trade union affiliation.

Objectives

SACA has had four objectives:

- To facilitate the access of organizations to government resources;
- To provide guidance about government funding for community organizations;
- To administer funding for independent community action; and
- To foster a better understanding of community action.

Funding

SACA has funding of about $17 million annually, of which about 10% is spent on administration. All of the funding could be described as Social Development spending.

New policies

Beginning in April 2002, the funding streams will change:

1. Funding for the collective defense of rights will be awarded for three years. SACA will administer the funding for the ministries, which will sponsor projects, so as to assure there is no disconnect with government policy. This is described as a "separation of financing and representation to avoid conflict".

2. Funding for "priority services" will end (as organizations link with their respective ministries) and SACA will be responsible for organizations, which are not attached to ministries.

3. Funding will continue for independent community action, but it will encourage the development of expertise rather than "base funding". The funding ceilings will be abolished.

4. A new stream, funding for the purchase and renovation of buildings that house community organizations, will begin. Up to 50% of the costs may be funded.

SACA management feels that, until now, the funding has been focused on "financing of the base" of organizations (except for funding of one-time undertaking such as colloques, evaluations, analyses). Now it will be financing of the "global mission" of an organization, which he says could generate larger budgets for an organization.

Funding under the new approach may be described as three types:

1. Funding of the global mission of organizations (fewer limitations on uses of funding);

2. Timely projects and non-recurring activities; and

3. Projects involving buildings.

SACA management reports that there have been discussions with HRDC to ensure that they are "complementing, not competing".

Funding Process

The application goes to SACA, it is analyzed and revised, then sent to the appropriate ministry for approval. Associated with SACA, but independent, there is a Consultative Committee on Community Action, representing 4000 community organizations. This committee discusses criteria and major directions. It also acts as a channel for revisions. SACA is also developing an appeal process involving the Consultative Committee.

Monitoring

Applications must be accompanied by financial reports of the organization, budget forecasts, etc.

Funding involves a contract of 5-6 pages. Different types of funding require different clauses. The contracts for [old] Program 3 funding (one-time events or undertakings, and community action projects) required a status report one month before the contract's end.

An important background factor is that the "strong current of autonomy of community organizations in Quebec means organizations do not wish to be told what they have to do". They are viewed as a "service alternative". Activities are reported and transparency is required. In the case where the funding goes to priority services, it's the ministries concerned that verify the results.

In other cases, it's possible for an organization to get help undertaking an evaluation that the organization can use. SACA offers to fund and assist in effective evaluation methods, but the organizations have the freedom to take up these offers or not.

Dissemination

Currently there is no special provision for dissemination of project information, but in the coming year certain elements of dissemination will be tied to the final payment for the project.

The project reports are available at SACA and they are distributed in the networks of the organizations concerned.

Achievement of Program Objectives

An internal review produced the design and implementation of new policies for SACA. In three years there will be a "Consultation Table" involving about 10 Social Development experts.

Information Available from SACA Web-site

The SACA program is the responsibility of the Minister responsible for Anti-Poverty and Social Exclusion Issues.

Funding results are provided on Website, with regional portals. The new site outlines a simple list of requirements for an application and describes the process of approval. It also links to two coalitions of Quebec non-profit organizations, which consult on Government policy:

- Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome, and
- Table des regroupements provinciaux des organismes communautaires et bénévoles

The Comité meets with an interministerial committee concerning SACA. It has 20 members. At the end of March it put out a press release criticizing the division by Government of the allocations within SACA. This was also linked through the SACA site.

The new funding policy emphasizes the "global mission" of organizations receiving operating funding. According to the Minister's Web statement, the "Changes introduced by the policy of recognizing and supporting community action" will formally acknowledge the essential contribution of community action to full citizenship and social development in Quebec. The Minister says it will involve community representatives in the design and implementation of the policy.

SACA is not the main source of funding for disability issues in Quebec. L'Office des personnes handicapées du Québec allocated $3.709m in funding to organizations in 2000/2001.